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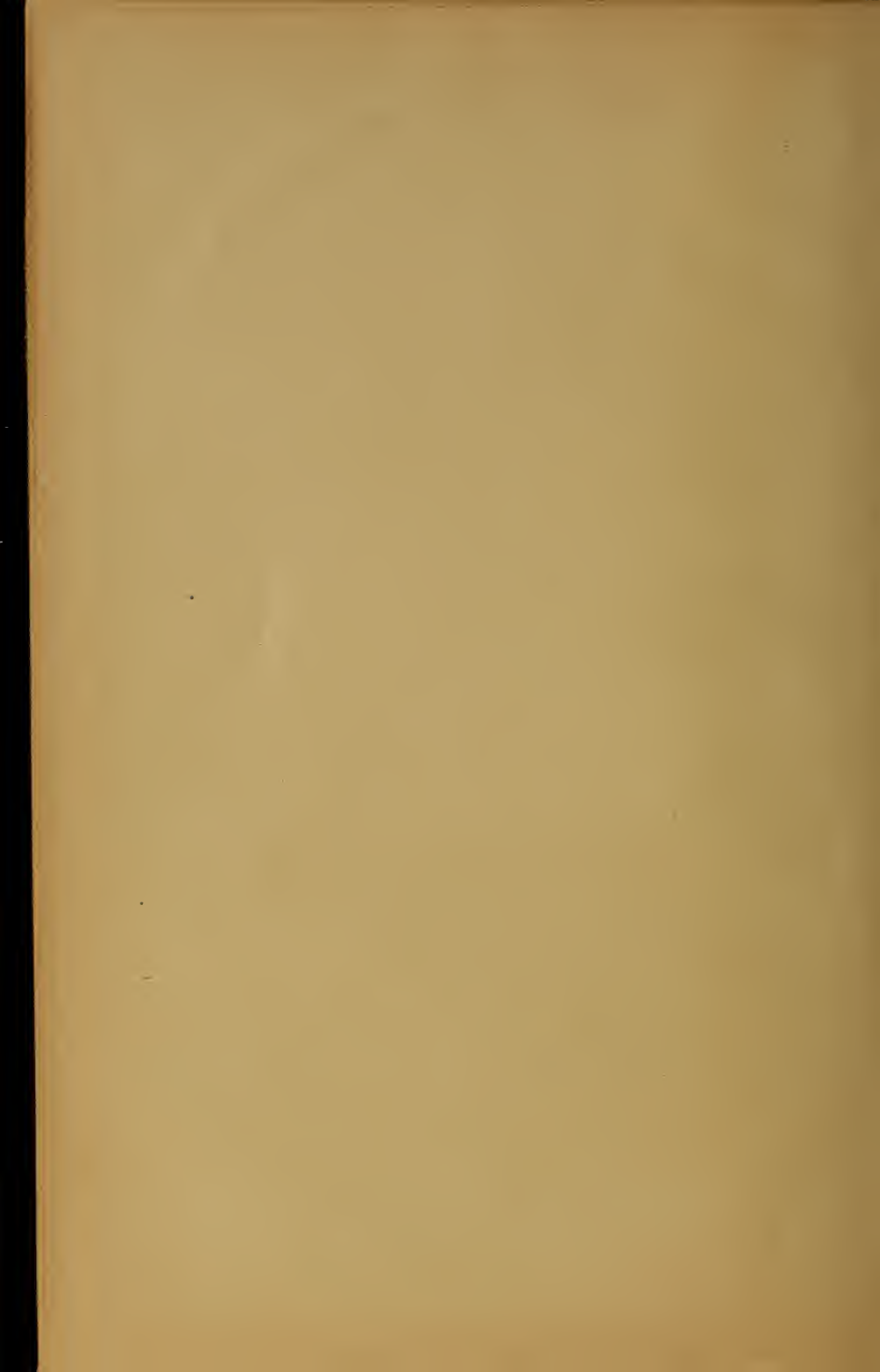
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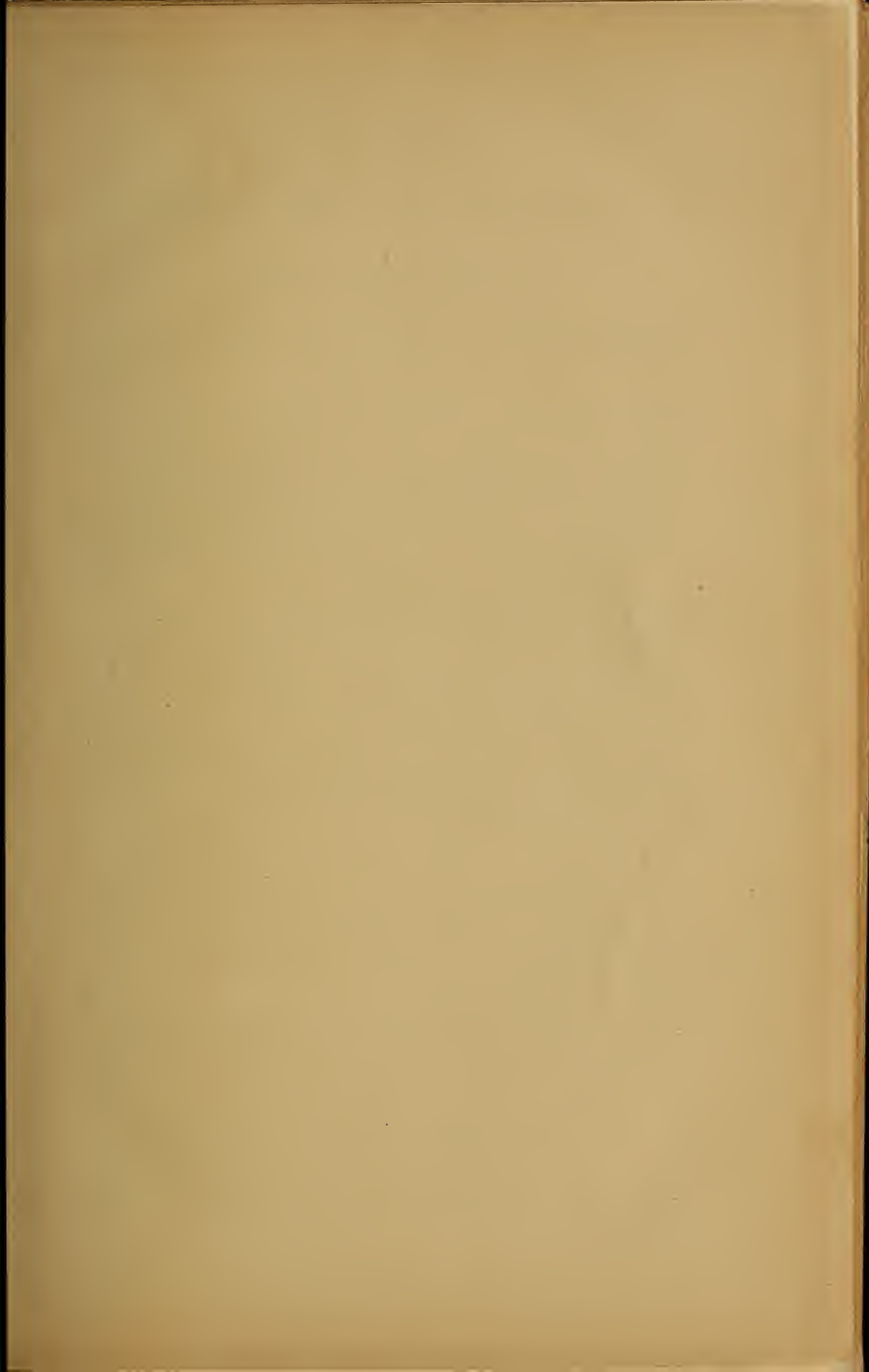


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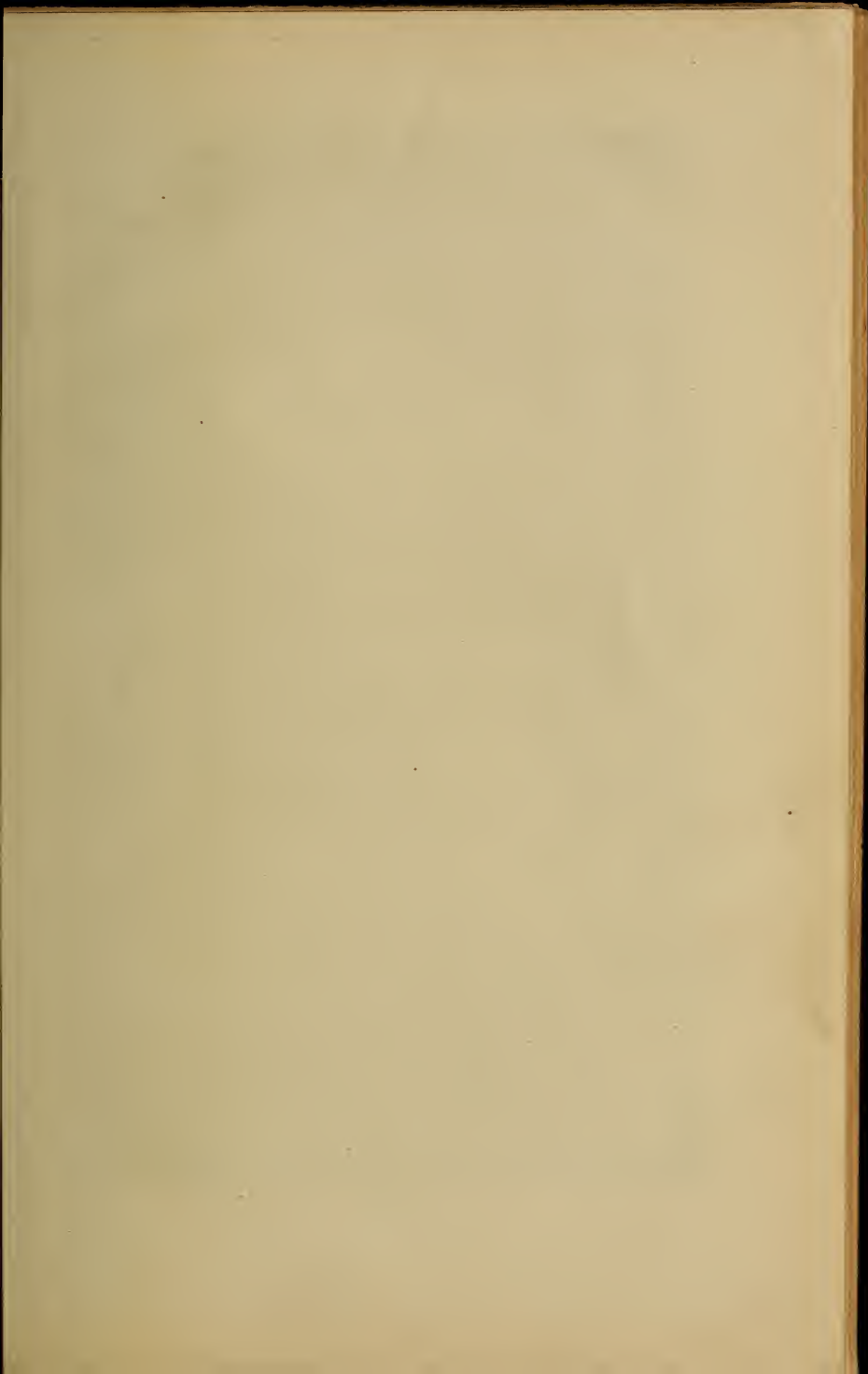
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HOPE.

Drawn thus by Giotto in the Chapel of the Arena at PADUA

FORS CLAVIGERA.

LETTERS

TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS OF
GREAT BRITAIN.

✓
By JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D
11



NEW YORK:
JOHN WILEY & SON,
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1871.
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FORS CLAVIGERA.

LETTER I.

DENMARK HILL,

1st January, 1871.

FRIENDS,

WE begin to-day another group of ten years, not in happy circumstances. Although, for the time, exempted from the direct calamities which have fallen on neighbouring states, believe me, we have not escaped them because of our better deservings, nor by our better wisdom; but only for one of two bad reasons, or for both: either that we have not sense enough to determine in a great national quarrel which side is right, or that we have not courage to defend the right, when we have discerned it.

I believe that both these bad reasons exist in full force; that our own political divisions prevent us from understanding the laws of international justice; and that, even if we did, we should not dare to defend, perhaps not even to assert them, being on this first of January, 1871, in much bodily fear; that is to say, afraid of the Russians; afraid of the Prussians; afraid of the Americans; afraid of the Hindoos; afraid of the Chinese; afraid of the

Japanese ; afraid of the New Zealanders ; and afraid of the Caffres : and very justly so, being conscious that our only real desire respecting any of these nations has been to get as much out of them as we could.

They have no right to complain of us, notwithstanding, since we have all, lately, lived ourselves in the daily endeavour to get as much out of our neighbours and friends as we could ; and having by this means, indeed, got a good deal out of each other, and put nothing into each other, the actually obtained result, this day, is a state of emptiness in purse and stomach, for the solace of which our boasted "insular position" is ineffectual.

I have listened to many ingenious persons, who say we are better off now than ever we were before. I do not know how well off we were before ; but I know positively that many very deserving persons of my acquaintance have great difficulty in living under these improved circumstances : also, that my desk is full of begging letters, eloquently written either by distressed or dishonest people ; and that we cannot be called, as a nation, well off, while so many of us are living either in honest or in villanous beggary.

For my own part, I will put up with this state of things, passively, not an hour longer. I am not an unselfish person, nor an Evangelical one ; I have no particular pleasure in doing good ; neither do I dislike doing it so much as to expect to be rewarded for it in another world. But I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else that I like, and the very light of the morning

sky, when there is any—which is seldom, now-a-days, near London—has become hateful to me, because of the misery that I know of, and see signs of, where I know it not, which no imagination can interpret too bitterly.

Therefore, as I have said, I will endure it no longer quietly; but henceforward, with any few or many who will help, do my poor best to abate this misery. But that I may do my best, I must not be miserable myself any longer; for no man who is wretched in his own heart, and feeble in his own work, can rightly help others.

Now my own special pleasure has lately been connected with a given duty. I have been ordered to endeavour to make our English youth care somewhat for the arts; and must put my uttermost strength into that business. To which end I must clear myself from all sense of responsibility for the material distress around me, by explaining to you, once for all, in the shortest English I can, what I know of its causes; by pointing out to you some of the methods by which it might be relieved; and by setting aside regularly some small percentage of my income, to assist, as one of yourselves, in what one and all we shall have to do; each of us laying by something, according to our means, for the common service; and having amongst us, at last, be it ever so small, a national Store instead of a National Debt. Store which, once securely founded, will fast increase, provided only you take the pains to understand, and have perseverance to maintain, the elementary principles of Human Economy, which have, of late, not

only been lost sight of, but wilfully and formally entombed under pyramids of falsehood.

And first I beg you most solemnly to convince yourselves of the partly comfortable, partly formidable fact, that your prosperity is in your own hands. That only in a remote degree does it depend on external matters, and least of all, on forms of Government. In all times of trouble the first thing to be done is to make the most of whatever forms of government you have got, by setting honest men to work them; (the trouble, in all probability, having arisen only from the want of such); and for the rest, you must in no wise concern yourselves about them: more particularly it would be lost time to do so at this moment, when whatever is popularly said about governments cannot but be absurd, for want of definition of terms. Consider, for instance, the ridiculousness of the division of parties into "Liberal" and "Conservative." There is no opposition whatever between those two kinds of men. There is opposition between Liberals and Illiberals; that is to say, between people who desire liberty, and who dislike it. I am a violent Illiberal; but it does not follow that I must be a Conservative. A Conservative is a person who wishes to keep things as they are; and he is opposed to a Destructive, who wishes to destroy them, or to an Innovator, who wishes to alter them. Now, though I am an Illiberal, there are many things I should like to destroy. I should like to destroy most of the railroads in England, and all the railroads in Wales. I should like to destroy and

rebuild the Houses of Parliament, the National Gallery, and the East end of London; and to destroy, without rebuilding, the new town of Edinburgh, the north suburb of Geneva, and the city of New York. Thus in many things I am the reverse of Conservative; nay, there are some long-established things which I hope to see changed before I die; but I want still to keep the fields of England green, and her cheeks red; and that girls should be taught to curtsy, and boys to take their hats off, when a professor or otherwise dignified person passes by: and that kings should keep their crowns on their heads, and bishops their crosiers in their hands; and should duly recognize the significance of the crown, and the use of the crook.

As you would find it thus impossible to class me justly in either party, so you would find it impossible to class any person whatever, who had clear and developed political opinions, and who could define them accurately. Men only associate in parties by sacrificing their opinions, or by having none worth sacrificing; and the effect of party government is always to develop hostilities and hypocrisies, and to extinguish ideas.

Thus the so-called Monarchic and Republican parties have thrown Europe into conflagration and shame, merely for want of clear conception of the things they imagine themselves to fight for. The moment a Republic was proclaimed in France, Garibaldi came to fight for it as a "Holy Republic." But Garibaldi could not know,—no mortal creature could know,—whether it was going to be

a Holy or Profane Republic. You cannot evoke any form of government by beat of drum. The proclamation of a Government implies the considerate acceptance of a code of laws, and the appointment of means for their execution, neither of which things can be done in an instant. You may overthrow a government, and announce yourselves lawless, in the twinkling of an eye, as you can blow up a ship, or upset and sink one. But you can no more create a government with a word, than an iron-clad.

No; nor can you even define its character in few words; the measure of sanctity in it depending on degrees of justice in the administration of law, which are often independent of form altogether. Generally speaking, the community of thieves in London or Paris have adopted Republican Institutions, and live at this day without any acknowledged Captain or Head; but under Robin Hood, brigandage in England, and under Sir John Hawkwood, brigandage in Italy, became strictly Monarchical. Theft could not, merely by that dignified form of government, be made a holy manner of life; but it was made both dexterous and decorous. The pages of the English knights under Sir John Hawkwood spent nearly all their spare time in burnishing the knights' armour, and made it always so bright, that they were called "the White Company." And the Notary of Tortona, Azario, tells us of them, that those foragers (*furatores*,) "were more expert than any "plunderers in Lombardy. They for the most part sleep "by day, and watch by night, and have such plans and

“artifices for taking towns, that never were the like or equal of them witnessed.” *

The actual Prussian expedition into France merely differs from Sir John's in Italy by being more generally savage, much less enjoyable, and by its clumsier devices for taking towns; for Sir John had no occasion to burn their libraries. In neither case does the monarchical form of government bestow any Divine right of theft; but it puts the available forces into a convenient form. Even with respect to convenience only, it is not yet determinable by the evidence of history, what is absolutely the best form of government to live under. There are, indeed, said to be republican villages, (towns?) in America, where everybody is civil, honest, and substantially comfortable; but these villages have several unfair advantages—there are no lawyers in them, no town councils, and no parliaments. Such republicanism, if possible on a large scale, would be worth fighting for; though, in my own private mind, I confess I should like to keep a few lawyers, for the sake of their wigs—and the faces under them—generally very grand when they are really good lawyers—and for their (unprofessional) talk. Also, I should like to have a Parliament, into which people might be elected on condition of their never saying anything about politics, that one might still feel sometimes that one was acquainted

* Communicated to me by my friend Mr. Rawdon Brown, of Venice, from his yet unpublished work *'The English in Italy in the 14th Century.'*

with an M.P. In the meantime Parliament is a luxury to the British squire, and an honour to the British manufacturer, which you may leave them to enjoy in their own way; provided only you make them always clearly explain, when they tax you, what they want with your money; and that you understand yourselves, what money is, and how it is got, and what it is good for, and bad for.

These matters I hope to explain to you in this and some following letters; which, among various other reasons, it is necessary that I should write in order that you may make no mistake as to the real economical results of Art teaching, whether in the Universities or elsewhere. I will begin by directing your attention particularly to that point.

The first object of all work—not the principal one, but the first and necessary one—is to get food, clothes, lodging, and fuel.

It is quite possible to have too much of all these things. I know a great many gentlemen, who eat too large dinners; a great many ladies, who have too many clothes. I know there is lodging to spare in London, for I have several houses there myself, which I can't let. And I know there is fuel to spare everywhere, since we get up steam to pound the roads with, while our men stand idle; or drink till they can't stand, idle, or any otherwise.

Notwithstanding, there is agonizing distress even in this highly-favoured England, in some classes, for want of food, clothes, lodging, and fuel. And it has become a popular

idea among the benevolent and ingenious, that you may in great part remedy these deficiencies by teaching, to these starving and shivering persons, Science and Art. In their way—as I do not doubt you will believe—I am very fond of both; and I am sure it will be beneficial for the British nation to be lectured upon the merits of Michael Angelo, and the nodes of the Moon. But I should strongly object myself to being lectured on either, while I was hungry and cold; and I suppose the same view of the matter would be taken by the greater number of British citizens in those predicaments. So that, I am convinced, their present eagerness for instruction in painting and astronomy proceeds from an impression in their minds that, somehow, they may paint or star-gaze themselves into clothes and victuals. Now it is perfectly true that you may sometimes sell a picture for a thousand pounds; but the chances are greatly against your doing so—much more than the chances of a lottery. In the first place, you must paint a very clever picture; and the chances are greatly against your doing that. In the second place, you must meet with an amiable picture-dealer; and the chances are somewhat against your doing that. In the third place, the amiable picture-dealer must meet with a fool; and the chances are not always in favour even of his doing that—though, as I gave exactly the sum in question for a picture, myself, only the other day, it is not for me to say so. Assume, however, to put the case most favourably, that what with the practical results of the energies of Mr. Cole at Kensing-

ton, and the æsthetic impressions produced by various lectures at Cambridge and Oxford, the profits of art employment might be counted on as a rateable income. Suppose even that the ladies of the richer classes should come to delight no less in new pictures than in new dresses; and that picture-making should thus become as constant and lucrative an occupation as dress-making. Still, you know, they can't buy pictures and dresses too. If they buy two pictures a day, they can't buy two dresses a day; or if they do, they must save in something else. They have but a certain income, be it never so large. They spend that, now; and you can't get more out of them. Even if they lay by money, the time comes when somebody must spend it. You will find that they do verily spend now all they have, neither more nor less. If ever they seem to spend more, it is only by running in debt and not paying; if they for a time spend less, some day the overplus must come into circulation. All they have, they spend; more than that, they cannot at any time: less than that, they can only for a short time.

Whenever, therefore, any new industry, such as this of picture-making, is invented, of which the profits depend on patronage, it merely means that you have effected a diversion of the current of money in your own favour, and to somebody else's loss. Nothing really has been gained by the nation, though probably much time and wit, as well as sundry people's senses, have been lost. Before such a diversion can be effected, a great many kind things must

have been done; a great deal of excellent advice given; and an immense quantity of ingenious trouble taken: the arithmetical course of the business throughout, being, that for every penny you are yourself better, somebody else is a penny the worse; and the net result of the whole precisely zero.

Zero, of course, I mean, so far as money is concerned. It may be more dignified for working women to paint than to embroider; and it may be a very charming piece of self-denial, in a young lady, to order a high art fresco instead of a ball-dress; but as far as cakes and ale are concerned, it is all the same,—there is but so much money to be got by you, or spent by her, and not one farthing more, usually a great deal less, by high art, than by low. Zero, also, observe, I mean partly in a complimentary sense to the work executed. If you have done no good by painting, at least you have done no serious mischief. A bad picture is indeed a dull thing to have in a house, and in a certain sense a mischievous thing; but it won't blow the roof off. Whereas, of most things which the English, French, and Germans are paid for making now-a-days,—cartridges, cannon, and the like,—you know the best thing we can possibly hope is that they *may* be useless, and the net result of them, zero.

The thing, therefore, that you have to ascertain, approximately, in order to determine on some consistent organization, is the maximum of wages-fund you have to depend on to start with, that is to say, virtually, the sum of the

income of the gentlemen of England. Do not trouble yourselves at first about France or Germany, or any other foreign country. The principle of Free-trade is, that French gentlemen should employ English workmen, for whatever the English can do better than the French ; and that English gentlemen should employ French workmen, for whatever the French can do better than the English. It is a very right principle, but merely extends the question to a wider field. Suppose, for the present, that France, and every other country but your own, were—what I suppose you would, if you had your way, like them to be—sunk under water, and that England were the only country in the world. Then, how would you live in it most comfortably ? Find out that, and you will then easily find out how two countries can exist together ; or more, not only without need for fighting, but to each other's advantage.

For, indeed, the laws by which two next-door neighbours might live most happily—the one not being the better for his neighbour's poverty, but the worse, and the better for his neighbour's prosperity—are those also by which it is convenient and wise for two parishes, two provinces or two kingdoms to live side by side. And the nature of every commercial and military operation which takes place in Europe, or in the world, may always be best investigated by supposing it limited to the districts of a single country. Kent and Northumberland exchange hops and coals on precisely the same economical principles as Italy and England exchange oil for iron ; and the

essential character of the war between Germany and France may be best understood by supposing it a dispute between Lancashire and Yorkshire for the line of the Ribble. Suppose that Lancashire, having absorbed Cumberland and Cheshire, and been much insulted and troubled by Yorkshire in consequence, and at last attacked; and having victoriously repulsed the attack, and retaining old grudges against Yorkshire, about the colour of roses, from the 15th century, declares that it cannot possibly be safe against the attacks of Yorkshire any longer, unless it gets the townships of Giggleswick and Wigglesworth, and a fortress on Pen-y-gent. Yorkshire replying that this is totally inadmissible, and that it will eat its last horse, and perish to its last Yorkshireman, rather than part with a stone of Giggleswick, a crag of Pen-y-gent, or a ripple of Ribble,—Lancashire with its Cumbrian and Cheshire contingents invades Yorkshire, and meeting with much Divine assistance, ravages the West Riding, and besieges York on Christmas Day. That is the actual gist of the whole business; and in the same manner you may see the downright common-sense—if any is to be seen—of other human proceedings, by taking them first under narrow and homely conditions. So for the present, we will fancy ourselves, what you tell me you all want to be, independent: we will take no account of any other country but Britain; and on that condition I will begin to show you in my next paper how we ought to live, after ascertaining the utmost limits of the wages-fund, which means the income of our gentle

men ; that is to say, essentially, the income of those who have command of the land, and therefore of all food.

What you call "wages," practically, is the quantity of food which the possessor of the land gives you, to work for him. There is finally, no "capital" but that. If all the money of all the capitalists in the whole world were destroyed ; the notes and bills burnt, the gold irrecoverably buried, and all the machines and apparatus of manufactures crushed, by a mistake in signals, in one catastrophe ; and nothing remained but the land, with its animals and vegetables, and buildings for shelter,—the poorer population would be very little worse off than they are at this instant ; and their labour, instead of being "limited" by the destruction, would be greatly stimulated. They would feed themselves from the animals and growing crops ; heap here and there a few tons of ironstone together, build rough walls round them to get a blast, and in a fortnight they would have iron tools again, and be ploughing and fighting, just as usual. It is only we who had the capital who would suffer ; we should not be able to live idle, as we do now, and many of us—I, for instance—should starve at once : but you, though little the worse, would none of you be the better, eventually, for our loss—or starvation. The removal of superfluous mouths would indeed benefit you somewhat, for a time ; but you would soon replace them with hungrier ones ; and there are many of us who are quite worth our meat to you in different ways, which I will explain in due place : also I

will show you that our money is really likely to be useful to you in its accumulated form, (besides that, in the instances when it has been won by work, it justly belongs to us), so only that you are careful never to let us persuade you into borrowing it, and paying us interest for it. You will find a very amusing story, explaining your position in that case, at the 117th page of the *Manual of Political Economy*, published this year at Cambridge, for your early instruction, in an almost devotionally catechetical form, by Messrs. Macmillan.

Perhaps I had better quote it to you entire : it is taken by the author "from the French."

There was once in a village a poor carpenter, who worked hard from morning to night. One day James thought to himself, "With my hatchet, saw, and hammer, I can only make coarse furniture, and can only get the pay for such. If I had a plane, I should please my customers more, and they would pay me more. Yes, I am resolved, I will make myself a plane." At the end of ten days, James had in his possession an admirable plane, which he valued all the more for having made it himself. Whilst he was reckoning all the profits which he expected to derive from the use of it, he was interrupted by William, a carpenter in the neighbouring village. William, having admired the plane, was struck with the advantages which might be gained from it. He said to James :—

"You must do me a service; lend me the plane for a year." As might be expected, James cried out, "How can you think of such a thing, William? Well, if I do you this service, what will you do for me in return?"

W. Nothing. Don't you know that a loan ought to be gratuitous?

J. I know nothing of the sort; but I do know that if I were to lend you my plane for a year, it would be giving it to you. To tell you the truth, that was not what I made it for.

W. Very well, then ; I ask you to do me a service ; what service do you ask me in return ?

J. First, then, in a year the plane will be done for. You must therefore give me another exactly like it.

W. That is perfectly just. I submit to these conditions. I think you must be satisfied with this, and can require nothing further.

J. I think otherwise. I made the plane for myself, and not for you. I expected to gain some advantage from it. I have made the plane for the purpose of improving my work and my condition ; if you merely return it to me in a year, it is you who will gain the profit of it during the whole of that time. I am not bound to do you such a service without receiving anything in return. Therefore, if you wish for my plane, besides the restoration already bargained for, you must give me a new plank as a compensation for the advantages of which I shall be deprived.

These terms were agreed to, but the singular part of it is that at the end of the year, when the plane came into James's possession, he lent it again ; recovered it, and lent it a third and fourth time. It has passed into the hands of his son, who still lends it. Let us examine this little story. The plane is the symbol of all capital, and the plank is the symbol of all interest.

If this be an abridgment, what a graceful piece of highly wrought literature the original story must be ! I take the liberty of abridging it a little more.

James makes a plane, lends it to William on 1st January for a year. William gives him a plank for the loan of it, wears it out, and makes another for James, which he gives him on 31st December. On 1st January he again borrows the new one ; and the arrangement is repeated continuously. The position of William therefore is, that he makes a plane every 31st of December ; lends it to James till the next day, and pays James a plank annually for the privilege of lending it to him on that

evening. This, in future investigations of capital and interest, we will call, if you please, "the position of William."

You may not at the first glance see where the fallacy lies (the writer of this story evidently counts on your not seeing it at all).

If James did not lend the plane to William, he could only get his gain of a plank by working with it himself, and wearing it out himself. When he had worn it out at the end of the year, he would, therefore, have to make another for himself. William, working with it instead, gets the advantage instead, which he must, therefore, pay James his plank for; and return to James, what James would, if he had not lent his plane, then have had;—not a new plane—but the worn-out one. James must make a new one for himself, as he would have had to do if no William had existed; and if William likes to borrow it again for another plank—all is fair.

That is to say, clearing the story of its nonsense, that James makes a plane annually, and sells it to William for its proper price, which, in kind, is a new plank. But this arrangement has nothing whatever to do with principal, or with interest. There are, indeed, many very subtle conditions involved in any sale; one among which is the value of ideas; I will explain that value to you in the course of time; (the article is not one which modern political economists have any familiarity with dealings in); and I will tell you somewhat also of the real nature of in-

terest; but if you will only get, for the present, a quite clear idea of "the Position of William," it is all I want of you.

I remain, your faithful friend,

JOHN RUSKIN.

My next letter, I hope, on 1st February.

LETTER II.

DENMARK HILL,

1st February, 1871.

FRIENDS,

BEFORE going farther, you may like to know, and ought to know, what I mean by the title of these Letters; and why it is in Latin. I can only tell you in part, for the letters will be on many things, if I am able to carry out my plan in them; and that title means many things, and is in Latin, because I could not have given an English one that meant so many. We, indeed, were not till lately a loquacious people, nor a useless one; but the Romans did more, and said less, than any other nation that ever lived; and their language is the most heroic ever spoken by men.

Therefore I wish you to know, at least, some words of it, and to recognize what thoughts they stand for.

Some day, I hope, you may know—and that European workmen may know—many words of it; but even a few will be useful.

Do not smile at my saying so. Of Arithmetic, Geometry, and Chemistry, you can know but little, at the utmost; but that little, well learnt, serves you well. And a little Latin, well learnt, will serve you also, and in a higher way than any of these.

“Fors” is the best part of three good English words,

Force, Fortitude, and Fortune. I wish you to know the meaning of those three words accurately.

“Force,” (in humanity), means power of doing good work. A fool, or a corpse, can do any quantity of mischief; but only a wise and strong man, or, with what true vital force there is in him, a weak one, can do good.

“Fortitude” means the power of bearing necessary pain, or trial of patience, whether by time, or temptation.

“Fortune” means the necessary fate of a man: the ordinance of his life which cannot be changed. To “make your Fortune” is to rule that appointed fate to the best ends of which it is capable.

Fors is a feminine word; and Clavigera is, therefore, the feminine of “Claviger.”

Clava means a club. Clavis, a key. Clavus, a nail, or a rudder.

Gero means “I carry.” It is the root of our word “gesture” (the way you carry yourself); and, in a curious bye-way, of “jest.”

Clavigera may mean, therefore, either Club-bearer, Key-bearer, or Nail-bearer.

Each of these three possible meanings of Clavigera corresponds to one of the three meanings of Fors.

Fors, the Club-bearer, means the strength of Hercules, or of Deed.

Fors, the Key-bearer, means the strength of Ulysses, or of Patience.

Fors, the Nail-bearer, means the strength of Lycurgus, or of Law.

I will tell you what you may usefully know of those three Greek persons in a little time. At present, note only of the three powers: 1. That the strength of Hercules is for deed, not misdeed; and that his club—the favourite weapon, also, of the Athenian hero Theseus, whose form is the best inheritance left to us by the greatest of Greek sculptors, (it is in the Elgin room of the British Museum, and I shall have much to tell you of him—especially how he helped Hercules in his utmost need, and how he invented mixed vegetable soup)—was for subduing monsters and cruel persons, and was of olive-wood. 2. That the Second Fors Clavigera is portress at a gate which she cannot open till you have waited long; and that her robe is of the color of ashes, or dry earth.* 3. That the Third Fors Clavigera, the power of Lycurgus, is Royal as well as Legal; and that the notablest crown yet existing in Europe of any that have been worn by Christian kings, was—people say—made of a Nail.

That is enough about my title, for this time; now to our work. I told you, and you will find it true, that, practically, all wages mean the food and lodging given you by the possessors of the land.

It begins to be asked on many sides how the possessors of the land became possessed of it, and why they should

* See Carey's translation of the ninth book of Dante's *Purgatory*, line 105.

still possess it, more than you or I: and Ricardo's "Theory" of Rent, though, for an economist, a very creditably ingenious work of fiction, will not much longer be imagined to explain the "Practice" of Rent.

The true answer, in this matter, as in all others, is the best. Some land has been bought; some, won by cultivation: but the greater part, in Europe, seized originally by force of hand.

You may think, in that case, you would be justified in trying to seize some yourselves, in the same way.

If you could, you, and your children, would only hold it by the same title as its present holders. If it is a bad one, you had better not so hold it; if a good one, you had better let the present holders alone.

And in any case, it is expedient that you should do so, for the present holders, whom we may generally call "Squires," (a title having three meanings, like Fors, and all good; namely, Rider, Shield-bearer, and Carver), are quite the best men you can now look to for leading: it is too true that they have much demoralized themselves lately by horse-racing, bird-shooting, and vermin-hunting; and most of all by living in London, instead of on their estates; but they are still without exception brave; nearly without exception, good-natured; honest, so far as they understand honesty, and much to be depended on, if once you and they understand each other.

Which you are far enough now from doing; and it is imminently needful that you should: so we will have an

accurate talk of them soon. The needfullest thing of all first is that you should know the functions of the persons whom you are being taught to think of as your protectors against the Squires ;—your “Employers,” namely ; or Capitalist Supporters of Labour.

“Employers.” It is a noble title. If, indeed, they have found you idle, and given you employment, wisely,—let us no more call them mere “Men” of Business, but rather “Angels” of Business : quite the best sort of Guardian Angel.

Yet are you sure it is necessary, absolutely, to look to superior natures for employment ? Is it inconceivable that you should employ—yourselves ? I ask the question, because these Seraphic beings, undertaking also to be Seraphic Teachers or Doctors, have theories about employment which may perhaps be true in their own celestial regions, but are inapplicable under worldly conditions.

To one of these principles, announced by themselves as highly important, I must call your attention closely, because it has of late been the cause of much embarrassment among persons in a sub-seraphic life. I take its statement verbatim, from the 25th page of the Cambridge catechism before quoted :

“This brings us to a most important proposition respecting capital, one which it is essential that the student should thoroughly understand.

“The proposition is this—A demand for commodities is not a demand for labour.

“The demand for labour depends upon the amount of capital :

the demand for commodities simply determines in what direction labour shall be employed.

“AN EXAMPLE.—The truth of these assertions can best be shown by examples. Let us suppose that a manufacturer of woollen cloth is in the habit of spending 50*l.* annually in lace. What does it matter, say some, whether he spends this 50*l.* in lace or whether he uses it to employ more labourers in his own business? Does not the 50*l.* spent in lace maintain the labourers who make the lace, just the same as it would maintain the labourers who make cloth, if the manufacturer used the money in extending his own business? If he ceased buying the lace, for the sake of employing more clothmakers, would there not be simply a transfer of the 50*l.* from the lacemakers to the clothmakers? In order to find the right answer to these questions let us imagine what would actually take place if the manufacturer ceased buying the lace, and employed the 50*l.* in paying the wages of an additional number of clothmakers. The lace manufacturer, in consequence of the diminished demand for lace, would diminish the production, and would withdraw from his business an amount of capital corresponding to the diminished demand. As there is no reason to suppose that the lacemaker would, on losing some of his custom, become more extravagant, or would cease to desire to derive income from the capital which the diminished demand has caused him to withdraw from his own business, it may be assumed that he would invest this capital in some other industry. This capital is not the same as that which his former customer, the woollen cloth manufacturer, is now paying his own labourers with; it is a second capital; and in the place of 50*l.* employed in maintaining labour, there is now 100*l.* so employed. There is no transfer from lacemakers to clothmakers. There is fresh employment for the clothmakers and a transfer from the lacemakers to some other labourers.”—(*Principles of Political Economy*, vol. 1, p. 102.)

This is very fine; and it is clear that we may carry forward the improvement in our commercial arrangements by recommending all the other customers of the lacemaker to treat him as the clothmaker has done. Whereupon he

of course leaves the lace business entirely, and uses all his capital in "some other industry." Having thus established the lacemaker with a complete "second capital," in the other industry, we will next proceed to develop a capital out of the clothmaker, by recommending all *his* customers to leave *him*. Whereupon, he will also invest his capital in "some other industry," and we have a Third capital, employed in the National benefit.

We will now proceed in the round of all possible businesses, developing a correspondent number of new capitals, till we come back to our friend the lacemaker again, and find him employed in whatever his new industry was. By now taking away again all his new customers, we begin the development of another order of Capitals in a higher Seraphic circle—and so develop at last an Infinite Capital!

It would be difficult to match this for simplicity; it is more comic even than the fable of James and William, though you may find it less easy to detect the fallacy here; but the obscurity is not because the error is less gross, but because it is threefold. Fallacy 1st is the assumption that a clothmaker may employ any number of men, whether he has customers or not; while a lacemaker must dismiss his men if he has not customers. Fallacy 2nd. That when a lacemaker can no longer find customers for lace, he can always find customers for something else. Fallacy 3rd (the essential one). That the funds provided by these new

customers, produced seraphically from the clouds, are a "second capital." Those customers, if they exist now, existed before the lacemaker adopted his new business; and were the employers of the people in that business. If the lacemaker gets them, he merely diverts their fifty pounds from the tradesmen they were before employing, to himself; and that is Mr. Mill's "second capital."

Underlying these three fallacies, however, there is, in the mind of "the greatest thinker of England," some consciousness of a partial truth, which he has never yet been able to define for himself—still less to explain to others. The real root of them is his conviction that it is beneficial and profitable to make broadcloth; and unbeneficial and unprofitable to make lace;* so that the trade of clothmaking should be infinitely extended, and that of lacemaking infinitely repressed. Which is, indeed, partially true. Making cloth, if it be well made, is a good industry; and if you had sense enough to read your Walter Scott thoroughly, I should invite you to join me in sincere hope that Glasgow might in that industry long flourish; and the chief hostelry at Aberfoil be at the sign of the "Nicol Jarvie." Also, of lacemakers, it is often true that they had better be doing something else.

* I assume the Cambridge quotation to be correct: in my old edition, (1848), the distinction is between "weavers and lace-makers" and "journeyman bricklayers;" and making velvet is considered to be the production of a "commodity," but building a house only doing a "service."

I admit it, with no good will, for I know a most kind lady, a clergyman's wife, who devotes her life to the benefit of her country by employing lacemakers; and all her friends make presents of collars and cuffs to each other, for the sake of charity; and as, if they did not, the poor girl-lacemakers would probably indeed be "diverted" into some other less diverting industry, in due assertion of the rights of women, (cartridge-filling, or percussion-cap making, most likely) I even go the length, sometimes, of furnishing my friend with a pattern, and never say a word to disturb her young customers in their conviction that it is an act of Christian charity to be married in more than ordinarily expensive veils.

But there *is* one kind of lace for which I should be glad that the demand ceased. Iron lace. If we must even doubt whether ornamental thread-work may be, wisely, made on cushions in the sunshine, by dexterous fingers for fair shoulders,—how are we to think of Ornamental Iron-work, made with deadly sweat of men, and steady waste, all summer through, of the coals that Earth gave us for winter fuel? What shall we say of labour spent on lace such as that?

Nay, says the Cambridge Catechism, "the demand for commodities is not a demand for labour."

Doubtless, in the economist's new earth, cast iron will be had for asking; the hapless and brave Parisians find it even rain occasionally out of the new economical Heavens, *without* asking. Gold will also one day, perhaps, be be-

gotten of gold, until the supply of that, as well as of iron, may be, at least, equal to the demand. But, in this world, it is not so yet. Neither thread-lace, gold-lace, iron-lace, nor stone-lace, whether they be commodities or incommodities, can be had for nothing. How much, think you, did the gilded flourishes cost round the gas-lamps on Westminster Bridge? or the stone-lace of the pinnacles of the temple of Parliament at the end of it, (incommodious enough, as I hear ;) or the point-lace of the park-railings which you so improperly pulled down, when you wanted to be Parliamentary yourselves; (much good you would have got of that!) or the "openwork" of iron railings generally—the special glories of English design? Will you count the cost, in labour and coals, of the blank bars ranged along all the melancholy miles of our suburban streets, saying with their rusty tongues, as plainly as iron tongues can speak, "Thieves outside, and nothing to steal within." A beautiful wealth they are! and a productive capital! "Well but," you answer, "the making them was work for us." Of course it was; is not that the very thing I am telling you! Work it was; and too much. But will you be good enough to make up your minds, once for all, whether it is really work that you want, or rest? I thought you rather objected to your quantity of work;—that you were all for having eight hours of it instead of ten? You may have twelve instead of ten easily. Sixteen, if you like! if it is only occupation you want, why do you cast the iron? Forge it in the

fresh air, on a workman's anvil ; make iron-lace like this of Verona,—



every link of it swinging loose like a knight's chain mail : then you may have some joy of it afterwards, and pride ; and say you knew the cunning of a man's right hand. But I think it is pay that you want, not work ; and it is very true that pretty ironwork like that does not pay ; but it *is* pretty, and it might even be entertaining, if you made those leaves at the top of it (which are, as far as I can see, only artichoke, and not very well done) in the likeness of all the beautiful leaves you could find, till you knew them all by heart. "Wasted time and hammer-strokes," say you ? "A wise people like the English will have nothing but spikes ; and besides, the spikes are

highly needful, so many of the wise people being thieves." Yes, that is so; and, therefore, in calculating the annual cost of keeping your thieves, you must always reckon, not only the cost of the spikes that keep them in, but of the spikes that keep them out. But how if, instead of flat rough spikes, you put triangular polished ones, commonly called bayonets; and instead of the perpendicular bars put perpendicular men? What is the cost to you then, of your railing, of which you must feed the idle bars daily? Costly enough, if it stays quiet. But how, if it begin to march and countermarch? and apply its spikes horizontally?

And now note this that follows; it is of vital importance to you.

There are, practically, two absolutely opposite kinds of labour going on among men, for ever.*

The first, labour supported by Capital, producing nothing.

The second, labour unsupported by Capital, producing all things.

Take two simple and precise instances on a small scale.

A little while since I was paying a visit in Ireland, and chanced to hear an account of the pleasures of a picnic

* I do not mean that there are no other kinds, nor that well-paid labour must necessarily be unproductive. I hope to see much done, some day, for just pay, and wholly productive. But these, named in the text, are the two opposite extremes; and, in actual life hitherto, the largest means have been usually spent in mischief, and the most useful work done for the worst pay.

party, who had gone to see a waterfall. There was of course ample lunch, feasting on the grass, and basketsfull of fragments taken up afterwards.

Then the company, feeling themselves dull, gave the fragments that remained to the attendant ragged boys, on condition that they should "pull each other's hair."

Here, you see, is, in the most accurate sense, employment of food, or capital, in the support of entirely unproductive labour.

Next, for the second kind. I live at the top of a short but rather steep hill; at the bottom of which, every day, all the year round, but especially in frost, coal-waggon get stranded, being economically provided with the smallest number of horses that can get them along on level ground.

The other day, when the road, frozen after thaw, was at the worst, my assistant, the engraver of that bit of iron-work on the 29th page, was coming up here, and found three coal-waggon at a lock, helpless; the drivers, as usual, explaining Political Economy to the horses, by beating them over the heads.

There were half-a-dozen fellows besides, out of work, or not caring to be in it—standing by, looking on. My engraver put his shoulder to a wheel (at least his hand to a spoke), and called on the idlers to do as much. They didn't seem to have thought of such a thing, but were ready enough when called on. "And we went up screaming," said Mr. Burgess.

Do you suppose that was one whit less proper human work than going up a hill against a battery, merely because, in that case, half of the men would have gone down, screaming, instead of up; and those who got up would have done no good at the top?

But observe the two opposite kinds of labour. The first, lavishly supported by Capital, and producing Nothing. The second, unsupported by any Capital whatsoever,—not having so much as a stick for a tool—but, called by mere goodwill, out of the vast void of the world's Idleness, and producing the definitely profitable result of moving a weight of fuel some distance towards the place where it was wanted, and sparing the strength of overloaded creatures.

Observe further. The labour producing no useful result was demoralizing. All such labour is.

The labour producing useful result was educational in its influence on the temper. All such labour is.

And the first condition of education, the thing you are all crying out for, is being put to wholesome and useful work. And it is nearly the last condition of it, too; you need very little more; but, as things go, there will yet be difficulty in getting that. As things have hitherto gone, the difficulty has been to avoid getting the reverse of that.

For, during the last eight hundred years, the upper classes of Europe have been one large Picnic Party. Most of them have been religious also; and in sitting down, by companies, upon the green grass, in parks, gardens, and

the like, have considered themselves commanded into that position by Divine authority, and fed with bread from Heaven: of which they duly considered it proper to bestow the fragments in support, and the tithes in tuition, of the poor.

But, without even such small cost, they might have taught the poor many beneficial things. In some places, they *have* taught them manners, which is already much. They might have cheaply taught them merriment also:—dancing and singing, for instance. The young English ladies who sit nightly to be instructed, themselves, at some cost, in melodies illustrative of the consumption of La Traviata, and the damnation of Don Juan, might have taught every girl peasant in England to join in costless choirs of innocent song. Here and there, perhaps, a gentleman might have been found able to teach his peasantry some science and art. Science and fine art don't pay; but they cost little. Tithes—not of the income of the country, but of the income, say, of its brewers—nay, probably the sum devoted annually by England to provide drugs for the adulteration of its own beer,—would have founded lovely little museums, and perfect libraries, in every village. And if here and there an English churchman had been found (such as Dean Stanley) willing to explain to peasants the sculpture of his and their own cathedral, and to read its black letter inscriptions for them; and, on warm Sundays, when they were too sleepy to attend to anything more proper—to tell them a story about some of

the people who had built it, or lay buried in it—we perhaps might have been quite as religious as we are, and yet need not now have been offering prizes for competition in art schools, nor lecturing with tender sentiment on the inimitableness of the works of Fra Angelico.

These things the great Picnic Party might have taught without cost, and with amusement to themselves. One thing, at least, they were bound to teach, whether it amused them or not;—how, day by day, the daily bread they expected their village children to pray to God for, might be earned in accordance with the laws of God. *This* they might have taught, not only without cost, but with great gain. One thing only they *Have* taught, and at considerable cost.

They have spent four hundred millions * of pounds here in England within the last twenty years!—how much in France and Germany, I will take some pains to ascertain for you,—and with this initial outlay of capital, have taught the peasants of Europe—to pull each other's hair.

With *this* result, 17th January, 1871, at and around the chief palace of their own pleasures, and the chief city of their delights:

“Each demolished house has its own legend of sorrow, of pain, and horror; each vacant doorway speaks to the eye, and almost to

* £992,740,328, in seventeen years, say the working men of Burnley, in their address just issued—an excellent address in its way, and full of very fair arithmetic—if its facts are all right; only I don't see, myself, how “from fifteen to twenty-five millions per annum,” make nine hundred and ninety-two millions in seventeen years.

the ear, of hasty flight, as armies or fire came—of weeping women and trembling children running away in awful fear, abandoning the home that saw their birth, the old house they loved—of startled men seizing quickly under each arm their most valued goods, and rushing, heavily laden, after their wives and babes, leaving to hostile hands the task of burning all the rest. When evening falls, the wretched outcasts, worn with fatigue and tears, reach Versailles, St. Germain, or some other place outside the range of fire, and there they beg for bread and shelter, homeless, foodless, broken with despair. And this, remember, has been the fate of something like a hundred thousand people during the last four months. Versailles alone has about fifteen thousand such fugitives to keep alive, all ruined, all hopeless, all vaguely asking the grim future what still worse fate it may have in store for them.”—*Daily Telegraph*, Jan. 17th, 1871.

That is the result round their pleasant city, and *this* within their industrious and practical one: let us keep for the reference of future ages, a picture of domestic life, out of the streets of London in her commercial prosperity, founded on the eternal laws of Supply and Demand, as applied by the modern Capitalist:

“A father in the last stage of consumption—two daughters nearly marriageable with hardly sufficient rotting clothing to ‘cover their shame.’ The rags that hang around their attenuated frames flutter in strips against their naked legs. They have no stool or chair upon which they can sit. Their father occupies the only stool in the room. They have no employment by which they can earn even a pittance. They are at home starving on a half-chance meal a day, and hiding their raggedness from the world. The walls are bare, there is one bed in the room, and a bundle of dirty rags are upon it. The dying father will shortly follow the dead mother, and when the parish coffin encloses his wasted form, and a pauper’s grave closes above him, what shall be his daughters’ lot? This is but a type of many other homes in the district: dirt, misery, and disease alone flourish in that wretched neighbourhood. ‘Fever and small-pox rage,’ as the inhab-

itants say, 'next door, and next door, and over the way, and next door to that, and further down.' The living, dying, and dead are all huddled together. The houses have no ventilation, the back yards are receptacles for all sorts of filth and rubbish, the old barrels or vessels that contain the supply of water are thickly coated on the sides with slime, and there is an undisturbed deposit of mud at the bottom. There is no mortuary house—the dead lie in the dog-holes where they breathed their last, and add to the contagion which spreads through the neighbourhood."—*Pall Mall Gazette*, January 7th, 1871, quoting the *Builder*.

As I was revising this sheet,—on the evening of the 20th of last month,—two slips of paper were brought to me. One contained, in consecutive paragraphs, an extract from the speech of one of the best and kindest of our public men, to the "Liberal Association" at Portsmouth; and an account of the performances of the 35-ton gun called the "Woolwich infant," which is fed with 700 pound shot, and 130 pounds of gunpowder at one mouthful; not at all like the Wapping infants, starving on a half-chance meal a day. "The gun was fired with the most satisfactory result," nobody being hurt, and nothing damaged but the platform, while the shot passed through the screens in front at the rate of 1,303 feet per second: and it seems, also, that the Woolwich infant has not seen the light too soon. For Mr. Cowper-Temple, in the preceding paragraph, informs the Liberals of Portsmouth, that in consequence of our amiable neutrality, "we must contemplate the contingency of a combined fleet coming from the ports of Prussia, Russia, and America, and making an attack on England."

Contemplating myself these relations of Russia, Prussia, Woolwich, and Wapping, it seems to my uncommercial mind merely like another case of iron railings—thieves outside, and nothing to steal within. But the second slip of paper announced approaching help in a peaceful direction. It was the prospectus of the Boardmen's and General Advertising Co-operative Society, which invites, from the "generosity of the public, a necessary small preliminary sum," and, "in addition to the above, a small sum of money by way of capital," to set the members of the society up in the profitable business of walking about London between two boards. Here *is* at last found for us, then, it appears, a line of life! At the West End, lounging about the streets, with a well-made back to one's coat, and front to one's shirt, is usually thought of as not much in the way of business; but, doubtless, to lounge at the East End about the streets, with one Lie pinned to the front of you, and another to the back of you, will pay, in time, only with proper preliminary expenditure of capital. My friends, I repeat my question: Do you not think you could contrive some little method of employing—your-selves? for truly I think the Seraphic Doctors are nearly at their wits' end (if ever their wits had a beginning). Tradesmen are beginning to find it difficult to live by lies of their own; and workmen will not find it much easier to live, by walking about, flattened between other people's.

Think over it. On the first of March, I hope to ask you to read a little history with me; perhaps, also, because the

world's time, seen truly, is but one long and fitful April, in which every day is All Fools' day,—we may continue our studies in that month; but on the first of May, you shall consider with me what you can do, or let me, if still living, tell you what I know you can do—those of you, at least, who will promise—(with the help of the three strong Fates), these three things:

1. To do your own work well, whether it be for life or death.

2. To help other people at theirs, when you can, and seek to avenge no injury.

3. To be sure you can obey good laws before you seek to alter bad ones.

Believe me,

Your faithful friend,

JOHN RUSKIN.

LETTER III.

DENMARK HILL,

1st March, 1871.

MY FRIENDS,

WE are to read—with your leave—some history to-day; the leave, however, will perhaps not willingly be given, for you may think that of late you have read enough history, or too much, in *Gazettes* of morning and evening. No; you have read, and can read, no history in these. Reports of daily events, yes;—and if any journal would limit itself to statements of well-sifted fact, making itself not a “news”paper, but an “olds”paper, and giving its statements tested and true, like old wine, as soon as things could be known accurately; choosing also, of the many things that might be known, those which it was most vital to know, and summing them in few words of pure English,—I cannot say whether it would ever pay well to sell it; but I am sure it would pay well to read it, and to read no other.

But even so, to know only what was happening day by day, would not be to read history. What happens now is but the momentary scene of a great play, of which you can understand nothing without some knowledge of the former action. And of that, so great a play is it, you can at best understand little; yet of history, as of science, a

little, well known, will serve you much, and a little, ill known, will do you fatally the contrary of service.

For instance, all your journals will be full of talk, for months to come, about whose fault the war was ; and you yourselves, as you begin to feel its deadly recoil on your own interests, or as you comprehend better the misery it has brought on others, will be looking about more and more restlessly for some one to accuse of it. That is because you don't know the law of Fate, nor the course of history. It is the law of Fate that we shall live, in part, by our own efforts, but in the greater part, by the help of others ; and that we shall also die, in part, for our own faults ; but in the greater part, for the faults of others. Do you suppose (to take the thing on the small scale in which you can test it) that those seven children torn into pieces out of their sleep, in the last night of the siege of Paris,* had sinned above all the children in Paris, or above yours ? or that their parents had sinned more than you ? Do you think the thousands of soldiers, German and French, who have died in agony, and of women who have died of grief, had sinned above all other soldiers, or mothers, or girls, there and here ?

It was not their fault, but their Fate. The thing appointed to them by the Third Fors. But you think it was at least the Emperor Napoleon's fault, if not theirs ? Or Count Bismarck's ? No ; not at all. The Emperor Napoleon had no more to do with it than a cork on the top of a

* *Daily Telegraph*, 30th January, 1871.

wave has with the toss of the sea. Count Bismarck had very little to do with it. When the Count sent for my waiter, last July, in the village of Lauterbrunnen, among the Alps,—that the waiter then and there packed his knapsack and departed, to be shot, if need were, leaving my dinner unserved (as has been the case with many other people's dinners since)—depended on things much anterior to Count Bismarck. The two men who had most to answer for in the mischief of the matter were St. Louis and his brother, who lived in the middle of the thirteenth century. One, among the very best of men; and the other, of all that I ever read of, the worst. The good man, living in mistaken effort, and dying miserably, to the ruin of his country; the bad man living in triumphant good fortune, and dying peaceably, to the ruin of many countries. Such were their Fates, and ours. I am not going to tell you of them, nor anything about the French war to-day; and you have been told, long ago, (only you would not listen, nor believe,) the root of the modern German power—in that rough father of Frederick, who “yearly made his country richer, and this not in money alone (which is of very uncertain value, and sometimes has no value at all, and even less), but in frugality, diligence, punctuality, veracity,—the grand fountains from which money, and all real *values* and valours, spring for men. As a Nation's *Husband*, he seeks his fellow among Kings, ancient and modern. Happy the nation which gets such a Husband, once in the half thousand years. The Nation, as foolish wives and

Nations do, repines and grudges a good deal, its weak whims and will being thwarted very often; but it advances steadily, with consciousness or not, in the way of well-doing; and, after long times, the harvest of this diligent sowing becomes manifest to the Nation, and to all Nations.” *

No such harvest is sowing for you,—Freemen and Independent Electors of Parliamentary representatives, as you think yourselves.

Freemen, indeed! You are slaves, not to masters of any strength or honour; but to the idlest talkers at that floral end of Westminster bridge. Nay, to countless meaner masters than they. For though, indeed, as early as the year 1102, it was decreed in a council at St. Peter's, Westminster, “that no man for the future should presume to carry on the wicked trade of selling men in the markets, like brute beasts, which hitherto hath been the common custom of England,” the no less wicked trade of *under-selling* men in markets has lasted to this day; producing conditions of slavery differing from the ancient ones only in being starved instead of full-fed: and besides this, a state of slavery unheard of among the nations till now, has arisen with us. In all former slaveries, Egyptian, Algerine, Saxon, and American, the slave's complaint has been of compulsory *work*. But the modern Politico-Economic slave is a new and far more injured species, condemned to Compulsory *Idleness*, for fear he should spoil

* Carlyle's *Frederick*, Book IV., chap. iii.

other people's trade; the beautifully logical condition of the national Theory of Economy in this matter being that, if you are a shoemaker, it is a law of Heaven that you must sell your goods under their price, in order to destroy the trade of other shoemakers; but if you are not a shoemaker, and are going shoeless and lame, it is a law of Heaven that you must not cut yourself a bit of cowhide, to put between your foot and the stones, because that would interfere with the total trade of shoemaking.

Which theory, of all the wonderful—!

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We will wait till April to consider of it; meantime, here is a note I have received from Mr. Alsager A. Hill, who having been unfortunately active in organizing that new effort in the advertising business, designed, as it seems, on this loveliest principle of doing nothing that will be perilously productive—was hurt by my manner of mention of it in the last number of *Fors*. I offered accordingly to print any form of remonstrance he would furnish me with, if laconic enough; and he writes to me, “The intention of the Boardmen’s Society is not, as the writer of *Fors Clavigera* suggests, to ‘find a line of life’ for able-bodied labourers, but simply, by means of co-operation, to give them the fullest benefit of their labour whilst they continue a very humble but still remunerative calling. See Rule 12. The capital asked for to start the organization is essential in all industrial partnerships, and in so poor a class of labour as that of street board-carrying could not

be supplied by the men themselves. With respect to the 'lies' alleged to be carried in front and behind, it is rather hard measure to say that mere announcements of public meetings or places of entertainments (of which street notices chiefly consist) are necessarily falsehoods."

To which, I have only to reply that I never said the newly-found line of life was meant for able-bodied persons. The distinction between able and unable-bodied men is entirely indefinite. There are all degrees of ability for all things; and a man who can do anything, however little, should be made to do that little usefully. If you can carry about a board with a bill on it, you can carry, not about, but where it is wanted, a board *without* a bill on it; which is a much more useful exercise of your inability. Respecting the general probity, and historical or descriptive accuracy, of advertisements, and their function in modern economy, I will inquire in another place. You see I use none for this book, and shall in future use none for any of my books; having grave objection even to the very small minority of advertisements which are approximately true. I am correcting this sheet in the "Crown and Thistle" inn at Abingdon, and under my window is a shrill-voiced person, slowly progressive, crying "Soles, three pair for a shillin'." In a market regulated by reason and order, instead of demand and supply, the soles would neither have been kept long enough to render such advertisement of them necessary, nor permitted, after their inexpedient preservation, to be advertised.

Of all attainable liberties, then, be sure first to strive for leave to be useful. Independence you had better cease to talk of, for you are dependent not only on every act of people whom you never heard of, who are living round you, but on every past act of what has been dust for a thousand years. So also, does the course of a thousand years to come, depend upon the little perishing strength that is in you.

Little enough, and perishing, often without reward, however well spent. Understand that. Virtue does not consist in doing what will be presently paid, or even paid at all, to you, the virtuous person. It may so chance ; or may not. It will be paid, some day ; but the vital condition of it, as virtue, is that it shall be content in its own deed, and desirous rather that the pay of it, if any, should be for others ; just as it is also the vital condition of vice to be content in its own deed, and desirous that the pay thereof, if any, should be to others.

You have probably heard of St. Louis before now : and perhaps also that he built the Sainte Chapelle of Paris, of which you may have seen that I wrote the other day to the *Telegraph*, as being the most precious piece of Gothic in Northern Europe ; but you are not likely to have known that the spire of it was Tenterden steeple over again, and the cause of fatal sands many, quick, and slow, and above all, of the running of these in the last hour-glass of France ; for that spire, and others like it, subordinate, have acted ever since as lightning-rods, in a reverse manner ; carry-

ing, not the fire of heaven innocently to earth, but electric fire of earth innocently to heaven, leaving us all, down here, cold. The best virtue and heart-fire of France (not to say of England, who building her towers for the most part with four pinnacles instead of one, in a somewhat quadrumanous type, finds them less apt as conductors), have spent themselves for these past six centuries in running up those steeples and off them, nobody knows where, leaving a "holy Republic" as residue at the bottom; helpless, clay-cold, and croaking, a habitation of frogs, which poor Garibaldi fights for, vainly raging against the ghost of St. Louis.

It is of English ghosts, however, that I would fain tell you somewhat to-day; of them, and of the land they haunt, and know still for theirs. For hear this to begin with:—

"While a map of France or Germany in the eleventh century is useless for modern purposes, and looks like the picture of another region, a map of England proper in the reign of Victoria hardly differs at all from a map of England proper in the reign of William" (the Conqueror). So says, very truly, Mr. Freeman in his *History of the Conquest*. Are there any of you who care for this *old* England, of which the map has remained unchanged for so long? I believe you would care more for her, and less for yourselves, except as her faithful children, if you knew a little more about her; and especially more of what she has been. The difficulty, indeed, at any time,

is in finding out what she has been ; for that which people usually call her history is not hers at all ; but that of her Kings, or the tax-gatherers employed by them, which is as if people were to call Mr. Gladstone's history, or Mr. Lowe's, yours and mine.

But the history even of her Kings is worth reading. You remember, I said, that sometimes in church it might keep you awake to be told a little of it. For a simple instance, you have heard probably of Absalom's rebellion against his father, and of David's agony at his death, until from very weariness you have ceased to feel the power of the story. You would not feel it less vividly if you knew that a far more fearful sorrow, of the like kind, had happened to one of your own Kings, perhaps the best we have had, take him for all in all. Not one only, but three of his sons, rebelled against *him*, and were urged into rebellion by their mother. The Prince, who should have been King after him, was pardoned, not once, but many times—pardoned wholly, with rejoicing over him as over the dead alive, and set at his father's right hand in the kingdom ; but all in vain. Hard and treacherous to the heart's core, nothing wins him, nothing warns, nothing binds. He flies to France, and wars at last alike against father and brother, till, falling sick through mingled guilt, and shame, and rage, he repents idly as the fever-fire withers him. His father sends him the signet ring from his finger in token of one more forgiveness. The Prince lies down on a heap of ashes with a halter round his neck,

and so dies. When his father heard it he fainted away three times, and then broke out into bitterest crying and tears. This, you would have thought enough for the Third dark Fate to have appointed for a man's sorrows. It was little to that which was to come. His second son, who was now his Prince of England, conspired against him, and pursued his father from city to city, in Norman France. At last, even his youngest son, best beloved of all, abandoned him, and went over to his enemies.

This was enough. Between him and his children Heaven commanded its own peace. He sickened and died of grief on the 6th of July, 1189.

The son who had killed him, "repented" now; but there could be no signet ring sent to him. Perhaps the dead do not forgive. Men say, as he stood by his father's corpse, that the blood burst from its nostrils. One child only had been faithful to him, but he was the son of a girl whom he had loved much, and as he should not; his Queen, therefore, being a much older person, and strict upon proprieties, poisoned her; nevertheless poor Rosamond's son never failed him; won a battle for him in England, which, in all human probability, saved his kingdom; and was made a bishop, and turned out a bishop of the best.

You know already a little about the Prince who stood unforgiven (as it seemed) by his father's body. He, also, had to forgive, in his time; but only a stranger's arrow shot—not those reversed "arrows in the hand of the giant,"

by which his father died. Men called him "Lion-heart," not untruly; and the English, as a people, have prided themselves somewhat ever since on having, every man of them, the heart of a lion; without inquiring particularly either what sort of heart a lion has, or whether to have the heart of a lamb might not sometimes be more to the purpose. But it so happens that the name was very justly given to this prince; and I want you to study his character somewhat, with me, because in all our history there is no truer representative of one great species of the British squire, under all the three significances of the name; for this Richard of ours was beyond most of his fellows, a Rider and a Shieldbearer; and beyond all men of his day, a Carver; and in disposition and *unreasonable* exercise of intellectual power, typically a Squire altogether.

Note of him first, then, that he verily desired the good of his people (provided it could be contrived without any check of his own humour), and that he saw his way to it a great deal clearer than any of your squires do now. Here are some of his laws for you:—

"Having set forth the great inconveniences arising from the diversity of weights and measures in different parts of the kingdom, he, by a law, commanded all measures of corn, and other dry goods, as also of liquors, to be exactly the same in all his dominions; and that the rim of each of these measures should be a circle of iron. By another law, he commanded all cloth to be woven two yards in breadth within the lists, and of equal goodness

in all parts ; and that all cloth which did not answer this description should be seized and burnt. He enacted, further, that all the coin of the kingdom should be exactly of the same weight and fineness ;—that no Christian should take any interest for money lent ; and, to prevent the extortions of the Jews, he commanded that all compacts between Christians and Jews should be made in the presence of witnesses, and the conditions of them put in writing.” So, you see, in Cœur-de-Lion’s day, it was not esteemed of absolute necessity to put agreements between *Christians* in writing ! Which if it were not now, you know we might save a great deal of money, and discharge some of our workmen round Temple Bar, as well as from Woolwich Dockyards. Note also that bit about interest of money also for future reference. In the next place observe that this King had great objection to thieves—at least to any person whom he clearly comprehended to be a thief. He was the inventor of a mode of treatment which I believe the Americans—among whom it has not fallen altogether into disuse—do not gratefully enough recognize as a Monarchical institution. By the last of the laws for the government of his fleet in his expedition to Palestine, it is decreed,—“ That whoever is convicted of theft shall have his head shaved, melted pitch poured upon it, and the feathers from a pillow shaken over it, that he may be known ; and shall be put on shore on the first land which the ship touches.” And not only so ; he even objected to any theft by misre-

presentation or deception,—for being evidently particularly interested, like Mr. Mill, in that cloth manufacture, and having made the above law about the breadth of the web, which has caused it to be spoken of ever since as “Broad Cloth,” and besides, for better preservation of its breadth, enacted that the Ell shall be of the same length all over the kingdom, and that it shall be made of iron—(so that Mr. Tennyson’s provision for National defences—that every shop-boy should strike with his cheating yard-wand home, would be mended much by the substitution of King Richard’s *honest* ell-wand, and for once with advisable encouragement to the iron trade)—King Richard finally declares—“That it shall be of the same goodness in the middle as at the sides, and that no merchant in any part of the kingdom of England shall stretch before his shop or booth a red or black cloth, or any other thing by which the sight of buyers is frequently deceived in the choice of good cloth.”

These being Richard’s rough and unreasonable, chancing nevertheless, being wholly honest, to be wholly right, notions of business, the next point you are to note in him is his unreasonable good humour; an eminent character of English Squires; a very loveable one; and available to himself and others in many ways, but not altogether so exemplary as many think it. If you are unscrupulously resolved, whenever you can get your own way, to take it; if you are in a position of life wherein you can get a good deal of it, and if you have pugnacity enough to enjoy

fighting with anybody who will not give it you, there is little reason why you should ever be out of humour, unless indeed your way is a broad one, wherein you are like to be opposed in force. Richard's way was a very narrow one. To be first in battle, (generally obtaining that main piece of his will without question; once only worsted, by a French knight, and then, not at all good-humouredly), to be first in recognized command—therefore contending with his father, who was both in wisdom and acknowledged place superior; but scarcely contending at all with his brother John, who was as definitely and deeply beneath him; good-humoured unreasonably, while he was killing his father, the best of kings, and letting his brother rule unresisted, who was among the worst; and only proposing for his object in life to enjoy himself everywhere in a chivalrous, poetical, and pleasantly animal manner, as a strong man always may. What should he have been out of humour for? That he brightly and bravely lived through his captivity is much indeed to his honour; but it was his point of honour to be bright and brave; not at all to take care of his kingdom. A king who cared for that, would have got thinner and sadder in prison.

And it remains true of the English squire to this day, that, for the most part, he thinks that his kingdom is given him that he may be bright and brave; and not at all that the sunshine or valour in him is meant to be of use to his kingdom.

But the next point you have to note in Richard is in-

deed a very noble quality, and true English; he always does as much of his work as he can with his own hands. He was not in any wise a king who would sit by a wind-mill to watch his son and his men at work, though brave kings have done so. As much as might be, of whatever had to be done, he would stedfastly do from his own shoulder; his main tool being an old Greek one, and the working God Vulcan's—the clearing axe. When that was no longer needful, and nothing would serve but spade and trowel, still the king was foremost; and after the weary retreat to Ascalon, when he found the place “so completely ruined and deserted, that it afforded neither food, lodging, nor protection,” nor any other sort of capital,—forthwith, 20th January, 1192—his army and he set to work to repair it; a three months' business, of incessant toil, “from which the king himself was not exempted, but wrought with greater ardour than any common labourer.”

The next point of his character is very English also, but less honourably so. I said but now that he had a great objection to anybody whom he clearly comprehended to be a thief. But he had great difficulty in reaching anything like an abstract definition of thieving, such as would include every method of it, and every culprit, which is an incapacity very common to many of us to this day. For instance, he carried off a great deal of treasure which belonged to his father, from Chinon (the royal treasury-town in France), and fortified his own castles in Poitou

with it; and when he wanted money to go crusading with, sold the royal castles, manors, woods, and forests, and even the superiority of the Crown of England over the kingdom of Scotland, which his father had wrought hard for, for about a hundred thousand pounds. Nay, the highest honours and most important offices become venal under him; and from a Princess's dowry to a Saracen caravan, nothing comes much amiss: not but that he gives generously also; whole ships at a time when he is in the humour; but his main practice is getting and spending, never saving; which covetousness is at last the death of him. For hearing that a considerable treasure of ancient coins and medals has been found in the lands of Vidomar, Viscount of Limoges, King Richard sends forthwith to claim this waif for himself. The Viscount offers him part only, presumably having an antiquarian turn of mind. Whereupon Richard loses his temper, and marches forthwith with some Brabant men, mercenaries, to besiege the Viscount in his castle of Chalus; proposing, first, to possess himself of the antique and otherwise interesting coin in the castle, and then, on his general principle of objection to thieves, to hang the garrison. The garrison, on this, offer to give up the antiquities if they may march off themselves; but Richard declares that nothing will serve but they must all be hanged. Whereon the siege proceeding by rule, and Richard looking, as usual, into matters with his own eyes, and going too near the walls, an arrow well meant, though half spent, pierces the strong

white shoulder; the shield-bearing one, carelessly forward above instead of under shield; or perhaps, rather, when he was afoot, shieldless, engineering. He finishes his work, however, though the scratch teases him; plans his assault, carries his castle, and duly hangs his garrison, all but the archer, whom in his royal unreasoning way he thinks better of, for the well-spent arrow. But he pulls it out impatiently, and the head of it stays in the fair flesh; a little surgery follows; not so skilful as the archery of those days, and the lion heart is appeased—

Sixth April, 1199.

We will pursue our historical studies, if you please, in that month of the present year. But I wish, in the meantime, you would observe, and meditate on, the quite Anglican character of Richard, to his death.

It might have been remarked to him, on his projecting the expedition to Chalus, that there were not a few Roman coins, and other antiquities, to be found in his own kingdom of England, without fighting for them, by mere spade-labour and other innocuous means;—that even the brightest new money was obtainable from his loyal people in almost any quantity for civil asking, and that the same loyal people, encouraged and protected, and above all, kept clean-handed, in the arts, by their king, might produce treasures more covetable than any antiquities.

“No;” Richard would have answered,—“that is all hypothetical and visionary; here is a pot of coin presently

to be had—no doubt about it—inside the walls here:—
let me once get hold of that, and then,”—

* * * *

That is what we English call being “Practical.”

Believe me,

Faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

LETTER IV.

DENMARK HILL,

MY FRIENDS,

1st April, 1871.

It cannot but be pleasing to us to reflect, this day, that if we are often foolish enough to talk English without understanding it, we are often wise enough to talk Latin without knowing it. For this month retains its pretty Roman name, and means the month of Opening ; of the light in the days, and the life in the leaves, and of the voices of birds, and of the hearts of men.

And being the month of Manifestation, it is pre-eminently the month of Fools ;—for under the beatific influences of moral sunshine, or Education, the Fools always come out first.

But what is less pleasing to reflect upon, this spring morning, is, that there are some kinds of education which may be described, not as moral sunshine, but as moral moonshine ; and that, under these, Fools come out both First—and Last.

We have, it seems, now set our opening hearts much on this one point, that we will have education for all men and women now, and for all boys and girls that are to be. Nothing, indeed, can be more desirable, if only we determine also what kind of education we are to have. It is taken for granted that any education must be good ;—that the more

of it we get, the better ; that bad education only means little education ; and that the worst thing we have to fear is getting none. Alas, that is not at all so. Getting no education is by no means the worst thing that can happen to us. One of the pleasantest friends I ever had in my life was a Savoyard guide, who could only read with difficulty, and write, scarcely intelligibly, and by great effort. He knew no language but his own—no science, except as much practical agriculture as served him to till his fields. But he was, without exception, one of the happiest persons, and, on the whole, one of the best, I have ever known ; and after lunch, when he had had his half bottle of Savoy wine, he would generally, as we walked up some quiet valley in the afternoon light, give me a little lecture on philosophy ; and after I had fatigued and provoked him with less cheerful views of the world than his own, he would fall back to my servant behind me, and console himself with a shrug of the shoulders, and a whispered “*Le pauvre enfant, il ne sait pas vivre !*”—(“The poor child, he doesn’t know how to live.”)

No, my friends, believe me, it is not the going without education at all that we have most to dread. The real thing to be feared is getting a bad one. There are all sorts—good, and very good ; bad, and very bad. The children of rich people often get the worst education that is to be had for money ; the children of the poor often get the best for nothing. And you have really these two things now to decide for yourselves in England before you

can take one quite safe practical step in the matter, namely, first, what a good education is ; and, secondly, who is likely to give it you.

What it is? "Everybody knows that," I suppose you would most of you answer. "Of course—to be taught to read, and write, and cast accounts ; and to learn geography, and geology, and astronomy, and chemistry, and German, and French, and Italian, and Latin, and Greek, and the aboriginal Aryan language."

Well, when you have learned all that, what would you do next. "Next? Why then we should be perfectly happy, and make as much money as ever we liked, and we would turn out our toes before any company." I am not sure myself, and I don't think you can be, of any one of these three things. At least, as to making you very happy, I know something, myself, of nearly all these matters—not much, but still quite as much as most men under the ordinary chances of life, with a fair education, are likely to get together—and I assure you the knowledge does not make me happy at all. When I was a boy I used to like seeing the sunrise. I didn't know, then, there were any spots on the sun ; now I do, and am always frightened lest any more should come. When I was a boy, I used to care about pretty stones. I got some Bristol diamonds at Bristol, and some dog-tooth spar in Derbyshire ; my whole collection had cost, perhaps, three half-crowns, and was worth considerably less ; and I knew nothing whatever, rightly, about any single stone in it ;—

could not even spell their names : but words cannot tell the joy they used to give me. Now, I have a collection of minerals worth, perhaps, from two to three thousand pounds ; and I know more about some of them than most other people. But I am not a whit happier, either for my knowledge, or possessions, for other geologists dispute my theories, to my grievous indignation and discontentment ; and I am miserable about all my best specimens, because there are better in the British Museum.

No, I assure you, knowledge by itself will not make you happy ; still less will it make you rich. Perhaps you thought I was writing carelessly when I told you, last month, “ science did not pay.” But you don’t know what science is. You fancy it means mechanical art ; and so you have put a statue of Science on the Holborn Viaduct, with a steam-engine regulator in its hands. My ingenious friends, science has no more to do with making steam-engines than with making breeches ; though she condescends to help you a little in such necessary (or it may be, conceivably, in both cases, sometimes unnecessary) businesses. Science lives only in quiet places, and with odd people, mostly poor. Mr. John Kepler, for instance, who is found by Sir Henry Wotton “ in the picturesque green country by the shores of the Donau, in a little black tent in a field, convertible, like a windmill, to all quarters, a camera-obscura, in fact. Mr. John invents rude toys, writes almanacks, practises medicine, for good reasons, his encouragement from the Holy Roman Empire and mankind

being a pension of 18*l.* a year, and that hardly ever paid." * That is what one gets by star-gazing, my friends. And you cannot be simple enough, even in April, to think I got my three thousand pounds'-worth of minerals by studying mineralogy? Not so; they were earned for me by hard labour; my father's in England, and many a sun-burnt vineyard-dresser's in Spain.

"What business had you, in your idleness, with their earnings then?" you will perhaps ask. None, it may be; I will tell you in a little while how you may find that out; it is not to the point now. But it is to the point that you should observe I have not kept their earnings, the portion of them, at least, with which I bought minerals. That part of their earnings is all gone to feed the miners in Cornwall, or on the Hartz Mountains, and I have only got for myself a few pieces of glittering (not always that, but often unseemly) stone, which neither vinedressers nor miners cared for; which you yourselves would have to learn many hard words, much cramp mathematics, and useless chemistry, in order to care for: which, if ever you did care for, as I do, would most likely only make you envious of the British Museum, and occasionally uncomfortable if any harm happened to your dear stones. I have a piece of red oxide of copper, for instance, which grieves me poignantly by losing its colour; and a crystal of sulphide of lead, with a chip in it, which causes me a great

* Carlyle, *Frederick*, vol. i. p. 321 (first edition).

deal of concern—in April; because I see it then by the fresh sunshine.

My oxide of copper and sulphide of lead you will not then wisely envy me. Neither, probably, would you covet a handful of hard brown gravel, with a rough pebble in it, whitish, and about the size of a pea; nor a few grains of apparently brass filings with which the gravel is mixed. I was but a Fool to give good money for such things, you think? It may well be. I gave thirty pounds for that handful of gravel, and the miners who found it were ill-paid then; and it is not clear to me that this produce of their labour was the best possible. Shall we consider of it, with the help of the Cambridge Catechism? at the tenth page of which you will find that Mr. Mill's definition of productive labour is—"That which produces utilities fixed and embodied in material objects."

This is very fine—indeed, superfine—English; but I can, perhaps, make the meaning of the Greatest Thinker in England a little more lucid for you by vulgarizing his terms.

"Object," you must always remember, is fine English for "Thing." It is a semi-Latin word, and properly means a thing "thrown in your way;" so that if you put "ion" to the end of it, it becomes Objection. We will rather say "Thing," if you have no objection—you and I. A "Material" thing, then, of course, signifies something solid and tangible. It is very necessary for Political Economists always to insert this word "material," lest

people should suppose that there was any use or value in Thought or Knowledge, and other such immaterial objects.

“Embodied” is a particularly elegant word; but superfluous, because you know it would not be possible that a utility should be Disembodied, as long as it was in a material object. But when you wish to express yourself as thinking in a great manner, you may say—as, for instance, when you are supping vegetable soup—that your power of doing so conveniently and gracefully is “Embodied” in a spoon.

“Fixed” is, I am afraid, rashly, as well as superfluously, introduced into his definition by Mr. Mill. It is conceivable that some Utilities may be also volatile, or planetary, even when embodied. But at last we come to the great word in the great definition—“Utility.”

And this word, I am sorry to say, puzzles me most of all; for I never myself saw a Utility, either out of the body, or in it, and should be much embarrassed if ordered to produce one in either state.

But it is fortunate for us that all this seraphic language, reduced to the vulgar tongue, will become, though fallen in dignity and reduced in dimension, perfectly intelligible. The Greatest Thinker in England means by these beautiful words to tell you that Productive labour is labour that produces a Useful Thing. Which, indeed, perhaps, you knew—or, without the assistance of great thinkers, might have known, before now. But if Mr. Mill had

said so much, simply, you might have been tempted to ask farther—"What things are useful, and what are not?" And as Mr. Mill does not know, nor any other Political Economist going,—and as they therefore particularly wish nobody to ask them,—it is convenient to say, instead of "useful things," "utilities fixed and embodied in material objects," because that sounds so very like complete and satisfactory information, that one is ashamed, after getting it, to ask for any more.

But it is not, therefore, less discouraging that for the present I have got no help towards discovering whether my handful of gravel with the white pebble in it was worth my thirty pounds or not. I am afraid it is not a useful thing to *me*. It lies at the back of a drawer, locked up all the year round. I never look at it now, for I know all about it: the only satisfaction I have for my money is knowing that nobody else can look at it; and if nobody else wanted to, I shouldn't even have that.

"What did you buy it for then?" you will ask. Well, if you must have the truth, because I was a Fool, and wanted it. Other people have bought such things before me. The white stone is a diamond, and the apparent brass filings are gold dust; but, I admit, nobody ever yet wanted such things who was in their right senses. Only now, as I have candidly answered all your questions, will you answer one of mine? If I hadn't bought it, what would you have had me do with my money? Keep *that* in the drawer instead?—or at my banker's, till it grew out of

thirty pounds into sixty and a hundred, in fulfilment of the law respecting seed sown in good ground ?

Doubtless, that would have been more meritorious for the time. But when I had got the sixty or the hundred pounds—what should I have done with *them* ? The question only becomes doubly and trebly serious ; and all the more, to me, because, when I told you last January that I had bought a picture for a thousand pounds, permitting myself in that folly for your advantage, as I thought, hearing that many of you wanted art Patronage, and wished to live by painting,—one of your own popular organs, the *Liverpool Daily Courier*, of February 9th, said, “it showed want of taste,—of tact,” and was “something like a mockery,” to tell you so ! I am not to buy pictures, therefore, it seems ;—you like to be kept in mines and tunnels, and occasionally blown hither and thither, or crushed flat, rather than live by painting, in good light, and with the chance of remaining all day in a whole and unextended skin ? But what *shall* I buy, then, with the next thirty pieces of gold I can scrape together ? Precious things have been bought, indeed, and sold, before now for thirty pieces, even of silver, but with doubtful issue. The over-charitable person who was bought to be killed at that price, indeed, advised the giving of alms ; but you won’t have alms, I suppose—you are so independent, nor go into alms-houses—(and, truly, I did not much wonder, as I walked by the old church of Abingdon, a Sunday or two since, where the alms-houses are set round the churchyard,

and under the level of it, and with a cheerful view of it, except that the tombstones slightly block the light of the lattice-windows; with beautiful texts from Scripture over the doors, to remind the paupers still more emphatically that, highly blessed as they were, they were yet mortal)—you won't go into alms-houses; and all the clergy in London have been shrieking against alms-giving to the lower poor this whole winter long, till I am obliged, whenever I want to give anybody a penny, to look up and down the street first, to see if a clergyman's coming. Of course, I know I might buy as many iron railings as I please, and be praised; but I've no room for them. I can't well burn more coals than I do, because of the blacks, which spoil my books; and the Americans won't let me buy any blacks alive, or else I would have some black dwarfs with parrots, such as one sees in the pictures of Paul Veronese. I should of course like, myself, above all things, to buy a pretty white girl, with a title—and I should get great praise for doing that—only I haven't money enough. White girls come dear, even when one buys them only like coals, for fuel. The Duke of Bedford, indeed, bought Joan of Arc, from the French, to burn, for only ten thousand pounds, and a pension of three hundred a year to the Bastard of Vendôme—and I could and would have given that for her, and not burnt her; but one hasn't such a chance every day. *Will* you, any of you, have the goodness—beggars, clergymen, workmen, seraphic doctors, Mr. Mill, Mr. Fawcett, or the Po-

litical-Economic Professor of my own University—I challenge you, I beseech you, all and singly, to tell me what I am to do with my money?

I mean, indeed, to give you my own poor opinion on the subject in May; though I feel the more embarrassed in the thought of doing so, because, in this present April, I am so much a fool as not even to know clearly whether I have got any money or not. I know, indeed, that things go on at present as if I had; but it seems to me that there must be a mistake somewhere, and that some day it will be found out. For instance, I have seven thousand pounds in what we call the Funds or Founded things; but I am not comfortable about the Founding of them. All that I can see of them is a square bit of paper, with some ugly printing on it, and all that I know of them is that this bit of paper gives me a right to tax you every year, and make you pay me two hundred pounds out of your wages; which is very pleasant for me; but how long will you be pleased to do so? Suppose it should occur to you, any summer's day, that you had better not? Where would my seven thousand pounds be? In fact, where are they now? We call ourselves a rich people; but you see this seven thousand pounds of mine has no real existence—it only means that you, the workers, are poorer by two hundred pounds a year than you would be if I hadn't got it. And this is surely a very odd kind of money for a country to boast of. Well, then, besides this, I have a bit of low land at Greenwich, which, as far as I see anything of it,

is not money at all, but only mud ; and would be of as little use to me as my handful of gravel in the drawer, if it were not that an ingenious person has found out that he can make chimney-pots of it ; and, every quarter, he brings me fifteen pounds off the price of his chimney-pots ; so that I am always sympathetically glad when there's a high wind, because then I know my ingenious friend's business is thriving. But suppose it should come into his head, in any less windy month than this April, that he had better bring me none of the price of his chimneys ? And even though he should go on, as I hope he will, patiently, —(and I always give him a glass of wine when he brings me the fifteen pounds),—is this really to be called money of mine ? And is the country any richer because, when anybody's chimney-pot is blown down in Greenwich, he must pay something extra, to me, before he can put it on again ?

Then, also, I have some houses in Marylebone, which, though indeed very ugly and miserable, yet, so far as they are actual beams and brick-bats put into shape, I might have imagined to be real property ; only, you know, Mr. Mill says that people who build houses don't produce a commodity, but only do us a service. So I suppose my houses are not "utilities embodied in material objects" (and indeed they don't look much like it) ; but I know I have the right to keep anybody from living in them unless they pay me ; only suppose some day the Irish faith, that people ought to be lodged for nothing, should

become an English one also—where would my money be? Where is it now, except as a chronic abstraction from other people's earnings?

So again, I have some land in Yorkshire—some Bank “Stock” (I don't in the least know what *that* is)—and the like; but whenever I examine into these possessions, I find they melt into one or another form of future taxation, and that I am always sitting—(if I were working I shouldn't mind, but I am only sitting) at the receipt of Custom, and a Publican as well as a Sinner. And then, to embarrass the business further yet, I am quite at variance with other people about the place where this money, whatever it is, comes from. The *Spectator*, for instance, in its article of 25th June of last year, on Mr. Goschen's “lucid and forcible speech of Friday week,” says that “the country is once more getting rich, and the money is filtering downwards to the actual workers.” But whence, then, did it filter down to us, the actual idlers? This is really a question very appropriate for April. For such golden rain raineth *not* every day, but in a showery and capricious manner, out of heaven, upon us; mostly, as far as I can judge, rather pouring down than filtering upon idle persons, and running in thinner dribbles, but I hope purer for the filtering process, to the “actual workers.” But where *does* it come from? and in the times of drought between the showers, where does it go to? “The country is getting rich again,” says the *Spectator*; but then, if the April clouds fail, may it get poor again? And when it

again becomes poor,—when, last 25th of June, it *was* poor,—what becomes, or had become, of the money? Was it verily lost, or only torpid in the winter of our discontent? or was it sown and buried in corruption, to be raised in a multifold power? When we are in a panic about our money, what do we think is going to happen to it? Can no economist teach us to keep it safe after we have once got it? nor any “beloved physician,”—as I read the late Sir James Simpson is called in Edinburgh—guard even our solid gold against death, or at least, fits of an apoplectic character, alarming to the family?

All these questions trouble me greatly; but still to me the strangest point in the whole matter is, that though we idlers always speak as if we were enriched by Heaven, and became ministers of its bounty to *you*; if ever you think the ministry slack, and take to definite pillage of us, no good ever comes of it to you; but the sources of wealth seem to be stopped instantly, and you are reduced to the small gain of making gloves of our skins; while, on the contrary, as long as we continue pillaging you, there seems no end to the profitableness of the business; but always, however bare we strip you, presently, more, to be had. For instance—just read this little bit out of Froissart—about the English army in France before the battle of Crécy:—

“We will now return to the expedition of the King of England. Sir Godfrey de Harcourt, as marshal, advanced before the King, with the vanguard of five hundred armed men and two thousand archers,

and rode on for six or seven leagues' distance from the main army, burning and destroying the country. They found it rich and plentiful, abounding in all things; the barns full of every sort of corn, and the houses with riches: the inhabitants at their ease, having cars, carts, horses, swine, sheep, and everything in abundance which the country afforded. They seized whatever they chose of all these good things, and brought them to the King's army; but the soldiers did not give any account to their officers, or to those appointed by the King, of the gold and silver they took, which they kept to themselves. When they were come back, with all their booty safely packed in waggons, the Earl of Warwick, the Earl of Suffolk, the Lord Thomas Holland, and the Lord Reginald Cobham, took their march, with their battalion on the right, burning and destroying the country in the same way that Sir Godfrey de Harcourt was doing. The King marched, with the main body, between these two battalions; and every night they all encamped together. The King of England and Prince of Wales had, in their battalion, about three thousand men-at-arms, six thousand archers, ten thousand infantry, without counting those that were under the marshals; and they marched on in the manner I have before mentioned, burning and destroying the country, but without breaking their line of battle. They did not turn towards Coutances, but advanced to St. Lo, in Coutantin, which in those days was a very rich and commercial town, and worth three such towns as Coutances. In the town of St. Lo was much drapery, and many wealthy inhabitants; among them you might count eight or nine score that were engaged in commerce. When the King of England was come near to the town, he encamped; he would not lodge in it for fear of fire. He sent, therefore, his advanced guard forward, who soon conquered it, at a trifling loss, and completely plundered it. No one can imagine the quantity of riches they found in it, nor the number of bales of cloth. If there had been any purchasers, they might have bought enough at a very cheap rate.

"The English then advanced towards Caen, which is a much larger town, stronger, and fuller of draperies and all other sorts of merchandize, rich citizens, noble dames and damsels, and fine churches.

"On this day (Froissart does not say what day) the English rose

very early, and made themselves ready to march to Caen; the King heard mass before sunrise, and afterwards mounting his horse, with the Prince of Wales, and Sir Godfrey de Harcourt (who was marshal and director of the army), marched forward in order of battle. The battalion of the marshals led the van, and came near to the handsome town of Caen.

“When the townsmen, who had taken the field, perceived the English advancing, with banners and pennons flying in abundance, and saw those archers whom they had not been accustomed to, they were so frightened that they betook themselves to flight, and ran for the town in great disorder.

“The English, who were after the runaways, made great havoc; for they spared none.

“Those inhabitants who had taken refuge in the garrets flung down from them, in these narrow streets, stones, benches, and whatever they could lay hands on; so that they killed and wounded upwards of five hundred of the English, which so enraged the King of England, when he received the reports in the evening, that he ordered the remainder of the inhabitants to be put to the sword, and the town burnt. But Sir Godfrey de Harcourt said to him: ‘Dear sir, assuage somewhat of your anger, and be satisfied with what has already been done. You have a long journey yet to make before you arrive at Calais, whither it is your intention to go: and there are in this town a great number of inhabitants, who will defend themselves obstinately in their houses, if you force them to it: besides, it will cost you many lives before the town can be destroyed, which may put a stop to your expedition to Calais, and it will not redound to your honour: therefore be sparing of your men, for in a month’s time you will have call for them.’ The King replied: ‘Sir Godfrey, you are our marshal; therefore order as you please; for this time we wish not to interfere.’

“Sir Godfrey then rode through the streets, his banner displayed before him, and ordered, in the King’s name, that no one should dare, under pain of immediate death, to insult or hurt man or woman of the town, or attempt to set fire to any part of it. Several of the inhabitants, on hearing this proclamation, received the English into their houses; and others opened their coffers to them, giving up their all, since they were assured of their lives. However, there

were, in spite of these orders, many atrocious thefts and murders committed. The English continued masters of the town for three days; in this time, they amassed great wealth, which they sent in barges down the river of Estreham, to St. Saveur, two leagues off, where their fleet was. The Earl of Huntingdon made preparations, therefore, with the two hundred men-at-arms and his four hundred archers, to carry over to England their riches and prisoners. The King purchased, from Sir Thomas Holland and his companions, the constable of France and the Earl of Tancarville, and paid down twenty thousand nobles for them.

“When the King had finished his business in Caen, and sent his fleet to England, loaded with cloths, jewels, gold and silver plate, and a quantity of other riches, and upwards of sixty knights, with three hundred able citizens, prisoners; he then left his quarters and continued his march as before, his two marshals on his right and left, burning and destroying all the flat country. He took the road to Evreux, but found he could not gain anything there, as it was well fortified. He went on towards another town called Louviers, which was in Normandy, and where there were many manufactories of cloth; it was rich and commercial. The English won it easily, as it was not inclosed; and having entered the town, it was plundered without opposition. They collected much wealth there; and, after they had done what they pleased, they marched on into the county of Evreux, where they burnt everything except the fortified towns and castles, which the King left unattacked, as he was desirous of sparing his men and artillery. He therefore made for the banks of the Seine, in his approach to Rouen, where there were plenty of men-at-arms from Normandy, under the command of the Earl of Harcourt, brother to Sir Godfrey, and the Earl of Dreux.

“The English did not march direct towards Rouen, but went to Gisors, which has a strong castle, and burnt the town. After this, they destroyed Vernon, and all the country between Rouen and Pont-de-l'Arche: they then came to Mantes and Meulan, which they treated in the same manner, and ravaged all the country round about.

“They passed by the strong castle of Roulleboise, and everywhere found the bridges on the Seine broken down. They pushed forward until they came to Poissy, where the bridge was also destroyed; but the beams and other parts of it were lying in the river.

“The King of England remained at the nunnery of Poissy to the middle in August, and celebrated there the feast of the Virgin Mary.”

It all reads at first, you see, just like a piece out of the newspapers of last month; but there are material differences, notwithstanding. We fight inelegantly as well as expensively, with machines instead of bow and spear; we kill about a thousand now to the score then, in settling any quarrel—(Agincourt was won with the loss of less than a hundred men; only 25,000 English altogether were engaged at Crecy; and 12,000, some say only 8,000, at Poitiers); we kill with far ghastlier wounds, crashing bones and flesh together; we leave our wounded necessarily for days and nights in heaps on the fields of battle; we pillage districts twenty times as large, and with completer destruction of more valuable property; and with a destruction as irreparable as it is complete; for if the French or English burnt a church one day, they could build a prettier one the next; but the modern Prussians couldn't even build so much as an imitation of one; we rob on credit, by requisition, with ingenious mercantile prolongations of claim; and we improve contention of arms with contention of tongues, and are able to multiply the rancour of cowardice, and mischief of lying, in universal and permanent print; and so we lose our tempers as well as our money, and become indecent in behaviour as in raggedness; for whereas, in old times, two nations separated by a little pebbly stream

like the Tweed, or even the two halves of one nation, separated by thirty fathoms' depth of salt water (for most of the English knights and all the English kings were French by race, and the best of them by birth also)—would go on pillaging and killing each other century after century, without the slightest ill-feeling towards, or disrespect for one another,—we can neither give anybody a beating courteously, nor take one in good part, or without screaming and lying about it: and finally, we add to these perfected Follies of Action more finely perfected Follies of Inaction; and contrive hitherto unheard-of ways of being wretched through the very abundance of peace; our workmen, here, vowing themselves to idleness, lest they should lower Wages, and there, being condemned by their parishes to idleness lest they should lower Prices; while outside the workhouse all the parishioners are buying anything nasty, so that it be cheap; and, in a word, under the seraphic teaching of Mr. Mill, we have determined at last that it is not Destruction, but Production, that is the cause of human distress; and the "Mutual and Co-operative Colonization Company" declares, ungrammatically, but distinctly, in its circular sent to me on the 13th of last month, as a matter universally admitted, even among Cabinet Ministers—"that it is in the greater increasing power of production and distribution, as compared with demand, enabling the few to do the work of many, that the active cause of the wide-spread poverty among the producing and lower-middle classes lay, which

entails such enormous burdens on the Nation, and exhibits our boasted progress in the light of a monstrous Sham."

Nevertheless, however much we have magnified and multiplied the follies of the past, the primal and essential principles of pillage have always been accepted; and from the days when England lay so waste under that worthy and economical King who "called his tailor lown," that "whole families, after sustaining life as long as they could by eating roots, and the flesh of dogs and horses, at last died of hunger, and you might see many pleasant villages without a single inhabitant of either sex," while little Harry Switch-of-Broom sate learning to spell in Bristol Castle, (taught, I think, properly by his good uncle the preceptorial use of his name-plant, though they say the first Harry was the finer clerk,) and his mother, dressed all in white, escaped from Oxford over the snow in the moonlight, through Bagley Wood here to Abingdon; and under the snows, by Woodstock, the buds were growing for the bower of his Rose,—from that day to this, when the villages round Paris, and food-supply, are, by the blessing of God, as they then were round London—Kings have for the most part desired to win that pretty name of "Switch-of-Broom" rather by habit of growing in waste places; or even emulating the Vision of Dion in "sweeping—diligently sweeping," than by attaining the other virtue of the *Planta Genista*, set forth by Virgil and Pliny, that it is pliant, and

rich in honey; the Lion-hearts of them seldom proving profitable to you, even so much as the stomach of Samson's Lion, or rendering it a soluble enigma in our Israel, that "out of the eater came forth meat;" nor has it been only your Kings who have thus made you pay for their guidance through the world, but your ecclesiastics have also made you pay for guidance out of it—particularly when it grew dark, and the signpost was illegible where the upper and lower roads divided;—so that, as far as I can read or calculate, dying has been even more expensive to you than living; and then, to finish the business, as your virtues have been made costly to you by the clergymen, so your vices have been made costly to you by the lawyers; and you have one entire learned profession living on your sins, and the other on your repentance. So that it is no wonder that, things having gone on thus for a long time, you begin to think that you would rather live as sheep without any shepherd, and that having paid so dearly for your instruction in religion and law, you should now set your hope on a state of instruction in Irreligion and Liberty, which is, indeed, a form of education to be had for nothing, alike by the children of the Rich and Poor; the saplings of the tree that was to be desired to make us wise, growing now in copsewood on the hills, or even by the roadsides, in a Republican-Plantagenet manner, blossoming into cheapest gold, either for coins, which of course you Republicans will call, not Nobles, but Ignobles; or crowns, second and third hand—(head, I should

say)—supplied punctually on demand, with liberal reduction on quantity ; the roads themselves beautifully public—tramwayed, perhaps—and with gates set open enough for all men to the free, outer, better world, your chosen guide preceding you merrily, thus,—



with music and dancing.

You have always danced too willingly, poor friends, to that player on the viol. We will try to hear, far away, a faint note or two from a more chief musician on stringed instruments, in May, when the time of the Singing of Birds is come.

Faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

LETTER V.

“ For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone,
The flowers appear on the earth,
The time of the singing of birds is come,
Arise, oh my fair one, my dove,
And come.”

DENMARK HILL,

MY FRIENDS,

1st May, 1871.

It has been asked of me, very justly, why I have hitherto written to you of things you were little likely to care for, in words which it was difficult for you to understand.

I have no fear but that you will one day understand all my poor words,—the saddest of them perhaps too well. But I have great fear that you may never come to understand these written above, which are part of a king's love-song, in one sweet May, of many long since gone.

I fear that for you the wild winter's rain may never pass,—the flowers never appear on the earth ;—that for you no bird may ever sing ;—for you no perfect Love arise, and fulfil your life in peace.

“ And why not for us, as for others ? ” will you answer me so, and take my fear for you as an insult ?

Nay, it is no insult ;—nor am I happier than you. For me, the birds do not sing, nor ever will. But they would, for you, if you cared to have it so. When I told you that

you would never understand that love-song, I meant only that you would not desire to understand it.

Are you again indignant with me? Do you think, though you should labour, and grieve, and be trodden down in dishonour all your days, at least you can keep that one joy of Love, and that one honour of Home? Had you, indeed, kept that, you had kept all. But no men yet, in the history of the race, have lost it so piteously. In many a country, and many an age, women have been compelled to labour for their husbands' wealth, or bread; but never until now were they so homeless as to say, like the poor Samaritan, "I have no husband." Women of every country and people have sustained without complaint the labour of fellowship: for the women of the latter days in England it has been reserved to claim the privilege of isolation.

This, then, is the end of your universal education and civilization, and contempt of the ignorance of the Middle Ages, and of their chivalry. Not only do you declare yourselves too indolent to labour for daughters and wives, and too poor to support them; but you have made the neglected and distracted creatures hold it for an honour to be independent of you, and shriek for some hold of the mattock for themselves. Believe it or not, as you may, there has not been so low a level of thought reached by any race, since they grew to be male and female out of starfish, or chickweed, or whatever else they have been made from, by natural selection,—according to modern science.

That modern science also, Economic and of other kinds, has reached its climax at last. For it seems to be the appointed function of the nineteenth century to exhibit in all things the elect pattern of perfect Folly, for a warning to the farthest future. Thus the statement of principle which I quoted to you in my last letter, from the circular of the Emigration Society, that it is over-production which is the cause of distress, is accurately the most Foolish thing, not only hitherto ever said by men, but which it is possible for men ever to say, respecting their own business. It is a kind of opposite pole (or negative acme of mortal stupidity) to Newton's discovery of gravitation as an acme of mortal wisdom:—as no wise being on earth will ever be able to make such another wise discovery, so no foolish being on earth will ever be capable of saying such another foolish thing, through all the ages.

And the same crisis has been exactly reached by our natural science, and by our art. It has several times chanced to me, since I began these papers, to have the exact thing shown or brought to me that I wanted for illustration, just in time*—and it happened that on the very

* Here is another curious instance: I have but a minute ago finished correcting these sheets, and take up the *Times* of this morning, April 21st, and find in it the suggestion by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the removal of exemption from taxation, of Agricultural horses and carts, in the very nick of time to connect it, as a proposal for economic practice, with the statement of economic principle respecting Production, quoted on this page.

day on which I published my last letter, I had to go to the Kensington Museum; and there I saw the most perfectly and roundly ill-done thing which, as yet, in my whole life, I ever saw produced by art. It had a tablet in front of it, bearing this inscription,—

“Statue in black and white marble, a Newfoundland Dog standing on a Serpent, which rests on a marble cushion, the pedestal ornamented with pietra dura fruits in relief.—*English. Present Century. No. I.*”

It was so very right for me, the Kensington people having been good enough to number it “I,” the thing itself being almost incredible in its one-ness; and, indeed, such a punctual accent over the iota of Miscreation,—so absolutely and exquisitely miscreant, that I am not myself capable of conceiving a Number two, or three, or any rivalry or association with it whatsoever. The extremity of its unvirtue consisted, observe, mainly in the quantity of instruction which was abused in it. It showed that the persons who produced it had seen everything, and practised everything; and misunderstood everything they saw, and misapplied everything they did. They had seen Roman work, and Florentine work, and Byzantine work, and Gothic work; and misunderstanding of everything had passed through them as the mud does through earthworms, and here at last was their worm-cast of a Production.

But the second chance that came to me that day, was more significant still. From the Kensington Museum I went to an afternoon tea, at a house where I was sure to

meet some nice people. And among the first I met was an old friend who had been hearing some lectures on botany at the Kensington Museum, and been delighted by them. She is the kind of person who gets good out of everything, and she was quite right in being delighted; besides that, as I found by her account of them, the lectures were really interesting, and pleasantly given. She had expected botany to be dull, and had not found it so, and "had learned so much." On hearing this I proceeded naturally to inquire what; for my idea of her was that before she went to the lectures at all, she had known more botany than she was likely to learn by them. So she told me that she had learned first of all that there "were seven sorts of leaves." Now I have always a great suspicion of the number Seven; because when I wrote the *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, it required all the ingenuity I was master of to prevent them from becoming Eight, or even Nine, on my hands. So I thought to myself that it would be very charming if there were only seven sorts of leaves; but that, perhaps, if one looked the woods and forests of the world carefully through, it was just possible that one might discover as many as eight sorts; and then where would my friend's new knowledge of Botany be? So I said, "That was very pretty; but what more?" Then my friend told me that she had no idea, before, that petals were leaves. On which, I thought to myself that it would not have been any great harm to her if she had remained under her old impression that petals were petals. But I

said, "That was very pretty, too; and what more?" So then my friend told me that the lecturer said, "the object of his lectures would be entirely accomplished if he could convince his hearers that there was no such thing as a flower." Now, in that sentence you have the most perfect and admirable summary given you of the general temper and purposes of modern science. It gives lectures on Botany, of which the object is to show that there is no such thing as a Flower; on Humanity, to show that there is no such thing as a Man; and on Theology, to show there is no such thing as a God. No such thing as a Man, but only a Mechanism; no such thing as a God, but only a series of Forces. The two faiths are essentially one: if you feel yourself to be only a machine, constructed to be a Regulator of minor machinery, you will put your statue of such science on your Holborn Viaduct, and necessarily recognize only major machinery as regulating *you*.

I must explain the real meaning to you, however, of that saying of the Botanical lecturer, for it has a wide bearing. Some fifty years ago the poet Goethe discovered that all the parts of plants had a kind of common nature, and would change into each other. Now this was a true discovery, and a notable one; and you will find that, in fact, all plants are composed of essentially two parts—the leaf and root—one loving the light, the other darkness; one liking to be clean, the other to be dirty; one liking to grow for the most part up, the other for the most part down; and each having faculties and purposes of its own.

But the pure one, which loves the light, has, above all things, the purpose of being married to another leaf, and having child-leaves, and children's children of leaves, to make the earth fair for ever. And when the leaves marry, they put on wedding-robcs, and are more glorious than Solomon in all his glory, and they have feasts of honey, and we call them "Flowers."

In a certain sense, therefore, you see the Botanical lecturer was quite right. There are no such things as Flowers—there are only Leaves. Nay, farther than this, there may be a dignity in the less happy, but unwithering leaf, which is, in some sort, better than the brief lily of its bloom;—which the great poets always knew,—well;—Chaucer, before Goethe; and the writer of the First Psalm, before Chaucer. The Botanical lecturer was in a deeper sense than he knew, right.

But in the deepest sense of all, the Botanical lecturer was, to the extremity of wrongness, wrong; for leaf, and root, and fruit exist, all of them, only—that there may be flowers. He disregarded the life and passion of the creature, which were its essence. Had he looked for these, he would have recognized that in the thought of Nature herself, there is, in a plant, nothing else but its flowers.

Now in exactly the sense that modern Science declares there is no such thing as a Flower, it has declared there is no such thing as a Man, but only a transitional form of Ascidians and apes. It may, or may not be true—it is not of the smallest consequence whether it be or not. The

real fact is, that, seen with human eyes, there is nothing else but man; that all animals and beings beside him are only made that they may change into him; that the world truly exists only in the presence of Man, acts only in the passion of Man. The essence of Light is in his eyes,—the centre of Force in his soul,—the pertinence of Action in his deeds.

And all true science—which my Savoyard guide rightly scorned me when he thought I had not,—all true science is “savoir vivre.” But all your modern science is the contrary of that. It is “savoir mourir.”

And of its very discoveries, such as they are, it cannot make use.

That telegraphic signalling was a discovery; and conceivably, some day, may be a useful one. And there was some excuse for your being a little proud when, about last sixth of April (Cœur de Lion’s death-day, and Albert Durer’s), you knotted a copper wire all the way to Bombay, and flashed a message along it, and back.

But what was the message, and what the answer? Is India the better for what you said to her? Are you the better for what she replied?

If not, you have only wasted an all-round-the-world’s length of copper wire,—which is, indeed, about the sum of your doing. If you had had, perchance, two words of common sense to say, though you had taken wearisome time and trouble to send them;—though you had written them slowly in gold, and sealed them with a hundred seals,

and sent a squadron of ships of the line to carry the scroll, and the squadron had fought its way round the Cape of Good Hope, through a year of storms, with loss of all its ships but one,—the two words of common sense would have been worth the carriage, and more. But you have not anything like so much as that, to say, either to India, or to any other place.

You think it a great triumph to make the sun draw brown landscapes for you. That was also a discovery, and some day may be useful. But the sun had drawn landscapes before for you, not in brown, but in green, and blue, and all imaginable colours, here in England. Not one of you ever looked at them then; not one of you cares for the loss of them now, when you have shut the sun out with smoke, so that he can draw nothing more, except brown blots through a hole in a box. There was a rocky valley between Buxton and Bakewell, once upon a time, divine as the Vale of Tempe; you might have seen the Gods there morning and evening—Apollo and all the sweet Muses of the Light—walking in fair procession on the lawns of it, and to and fro among the pinnacles of its crags. You cared neither for Gods nor grass, but for cash (which you did not know the way to get); you thought you could get it by what the *Times* calls “Railroad Enterprise.” You Enterprised a Railroad through the valley—you blasted its rocks away, heaped thousands of tons of shale into its lovely stream. The valley is gone, and the Gods with it; and now, every fool in Buxton can

be at Bakewell in half an hour, and every fool in Bakewell at Buxton; which you think a lucrative process of exchange—you Fools Everywhere.

To talk at a distance, when you have nothing to say, though you were ever so near; to go fast from this place to that, with nothing to do either at one or the other: these are powers certainly. Much more, power of increased Production, if you, indeed, had got it, would be something to boast of. But are you so entirely sure that you *have* got it—that the mortal disease of plenty, and afflictive affluence of good things, are all you have to dread?

Observe. A man and a woman, with their children, properly trained, are able easily to cultivate as much ground as will feed them; to build as much wall and roof as will lodge them, and to spin and weave as much cloth as will clothe them. They can all be perfectly happy and healthy in doing this. Supposing that they invent machinery which will build, plough, thresh, cook, and weave, and that they have none of these things any more to do, but may read, or play croquet, or cricket, all day long, I believe myself that they will neither be so good nor so happy as without the machines. But I waive my belief in this matter for the time. I will assume that they become more refined and moral persons, and that idleness is in future to be the mother of all good. But observe, I repeat, the power of your machine is only in enabling them to be idle. It will not enable them to live

better than they did before, nor to live in greater numbers. Get your heads quite clear on this matter. Out of so much ground, only so much living is to be got, with or without machinery. You may set a million of steam-ploughs to work on an acre, if you like—out of that acre only a given number of grains of corn will grow, scratch or scorch it as you will. So that the question is not at all whether, by having more machines, more of you can live. No machines will increase the possibilities of life. They only increase the possibilities of idleness. Suppose, for instance, you could get the oxen in your plough driven by a goblin, who would ask for no pay, not even a cream bowl,—(you have nearly managed to get it driven by an iron goblin, as it is;)—Well, your furrow will take no more seeds than if you had held the stilts yourself. But, instead of holding them, you sit, I presume, on a bank beside the field, under an eglantine;—watch the goblin at his work, and read poetry. Meantime, your wife in the house has also got a goblin to weave and wash for her. And she is lying on the sofa, reading poetry.

Now, as I said, I don't believe you would be happier so, but I am willing to believe it; only, since you are already such brave mechanists, show me at least one or two places where you *are* happier. Let me see one small example of approach to this seraphic condition. *I* can show *you* examples, millions of them, of happy people, made happy by their own industry. Farm after farm I can show you in Bavaria, Switzerland, the Tyrol, and such

other places, where men and women are perfectly happy and good, without any iron servants. Show me, therefore, some English family, with its fiery familiar, happier than these. Or bring me—for I am not inconvincible by any kind of evidence,—bring me the testimony of an English family or two to their increased felicity. Or if you cannot do so much as that, can you convince even themselves of it? They *are* perhaps happy, if only they knew how happy they were; Virgil thought so, long ago, of simple rustics; but you hear at present your steam-propelled rustics are crying out that they are anything else than happy, and that they regard their boasted progress “in the light of a monstrous Sham.” I must tell you one little thing, however, which greatly perplexes my imagination of the relieved ploughman sitting under his rose bower, reading poetry. I have told it you before, indeed, but I forget where. There was really a great festivity, and expression of satisfaction in the new order of things, down in Cumberland, a little while ago; some first of May, I think it was, a country festival, such as the old heathens, who had no iron servants, used to keep with piping and dancing. So I thought, from the liberated country people—their work all done for them by goblins—we should have some extraordinary piping and dancing. But there was no dancing at all, and they could not even provide their own piping. They had their goblin to Pipe for them. They walked in procession after their steam plough, and their steam plough whistled

to them occasionally in the most melodious manner it could. Which seemed to me, indeed, a return to more than Arcadian simplicity; for in old Arcadia, plough-boys truly whistled as they went, for want of thought; whereas, here was verily a large company walking without thought, but not having any more even the capacity of doing their own Whistling.

But next, as to the inside of the house. Before you got your power-looms, a woman could always make herself a chemise and petticoat of bright and pretty appearance. I have seen a Bavarian peasant-woman at church in Munich, looking a much grander creature, and more beautifully dressed, than any of the crossed and embroidered angels in Hesse's high-art frescoes; (which happened to be just above her, so that I could look from one to the other). Well, here you are, in England, served by household demons, with five hundred fingers, at least, weaving, for one that used to weave in the days of Minerva. You ought to be able to show me five hundred dresses for one that used to be; tidiness ought to have become five hundred fold tidier; tapestry should be increased into cinquecento-fold iridescence of tapestry. Not only your peasant-girl ought to be lying on the sofa reading poetry, but she ought to have in her wardrobe five hundred petticoats instead of one. Is that, indeed, your issue? or are you only on a curiously crooked way to it?

It is just possible, indeed, that you may not have been allowed to get the use of the goblin's work—that other

people may have got the use of it, and you none; because, perhaps, you have not been able to evoke goblins wholly for your own personal service; but have been borrowing goblins from the capitalist, and paying interest, in the "position of William," on ghostly self-going planes; but suppose you had laid by capital enough, yourselves, to hire all the demons in the world,—nay,—all that are inside of it; are you quite sure you know what you might best set them to work at? and what "useful things" you should command them to make for you? I told you, last month, that no economist going (whether by steam or ghost,) knew what are useful things and what are not. Very few of you know, yourselves, except by bitter experience of the want of them. And no demons, either of iron or spirit, can ever make them.

There are three Material things, not only useful, but essential to Life. No one "knows how to live" till he has got them.

These are, Pure Air, Water, and Earth.

There are three Immaterial things, not only useful, but essential to Life. No one knows how to live till he has got them also.

These are, Admiration, Hope, and Love.*

Admiration—the power of discerning and taking delight in what is beautiful in visible Form, and lovely in human Character; and, necessarily, striving to produce

* Wordsworth, *Excursion*, Book 4th; in Moxon's edition, 1857 (stupidly without numbers to lines), vol. vi. p. 135.

what is beautiful in form, and to become what is lovely in character.

Hope—the recognition, by true Foresight, of better things to be reached hereafter, whether by ourselves or others; necessarily issuing in the straightforward and undisappointable effort to advance, according to our proper power, the gaining of them.

Love, both of family and neighbour, faithful, and satisfied.

These are the six chiefly useful things to be got by Political Economy, when it *has* become a science. I will briefly tell you what modern Political Economy—the great “savoir mourir”—is doing with them.

The first three, I said, are Pure Air, Water, and Earth.

Heaven gives you the main elements of these. You can destroy them at your pleasure, or increase, almost without limit, the available quantities of them.

You can vitiate the air by your manner of life, and of death, to any extent. You might easily vitiate it so as to bring such a pestilence on the globe as would end all of you. You or your fellows, German and French, are at present busy in vitiating it to the best of your power in every direction;—chiefly at this moment with corpses, and animal and vegetable ruin in war: changing men, horses, and garden-stuff into noxious gas. But everywhere, and all day long, you are vitiating it with foul chemical exhalations; and the horrible nests, which you call towns, are

little more than laboratories for the distillation into heaven of venomous smokes and smells, mixed with effluvia from decaying animal matter, and infectious miasmata from purulent disease.

On the other hand, your power of purifying the air, by dealing properly and swiftly with all substances in corruption; by absolutely forbidding noxious manufactures; and by planting in all soils the trees which cleanse and invigorate earth and atmosphere,—is literally infinite. You might make every breath of air you draw, food.

Secondly, your power over the rain and river-waters of the earth is infinite. You can bring rain where you will, by planting wisely and tending carefully;—drought, where you will, by ravage of woods and neglect of the soil. You might have the rivers of England as pure as the crystal of the rock;—beautiful in falls, in lakes, in living pools;—so full of fish that you might take them out with your hands instead of nets. Or you may do always as you have done now, turn every river of England into a common sewer, so that you cannot so much as baptize an English baby but with filth, unless you hold its face out in the rain; and even *that* falls dirty.

Then for the third, Earth,—meant to be nourishing for you, and blossoming. You have learned, about it, that there is no such thing as a flower; and as far as your scientific hands and scientific brains, inventive of explosive and deathful, instead of blossoming and life-giving, Dust,

can contrive, you have turned the Mother-Earth, Deme-
ter,* into the Avenger-Earth, Tisiphone—with the voice of
your brother's blood crying out of it, in one wild harmony
round all its murderous sphere.

* Read this, for instance, concerning the Gardens of Paris:—one sen-
tence in the letter is omitted; I will give it in full elsewhere, with its
necessary comments:—

“*To the Editor of the Times.*

“*5th April, 1871.*

“SIR,—As the paragraph you quoted on Monday from the *Field* gives
no idea of the destruction in the gardens round Paris, if you can spare
me a very little space I will endeavour to supplement it.

“The public gardens in the interior of Paris, including the planting on
the greater number of the Boulevards, are in a condition perfectly sur-
prising when one considers the sufferings even well-to-do persons had to
endure for want of fuel during the siege. Some of them, like the little
oases in the centre of the Louvre, even look as pretty as ever. After
a similar ordeal it is probable we should not have a stick left in London,
and the presence of the very handsome planes on the Boulevards, and
large trees in the various squares and gardens, after the winter of 1870-
71, is most creditable to the population. But when one goes beyond the
Champs Elysées and towards the Bois, down the once beautiful Avenue
de l'Impératrice, a sad scene of desolation presents itself. A year ago it
was the finest avenue garden in existence; now a considerable part of
the surface where troops were camped is about as filthy and as cheerless
as Leicester Square or a sparsely furnished rubbish yard.

“The view into the once richly-wooded Bois from the huge and ugly
banks of earth which now cross the noble roads leading into it is deso-
late indeed, the stumps of the trees cut down over a large extent of its
surface reminding one of the dreary scenes observable in many parts of
Canada and the United States, where the stumps of the burnt or cut-
down pines are allowed to rot away for years. The zone of ruins round
the vast belt of fortifications I need not speak of, nor of the other zone
of destruction round each of the forts, as here houses and gardens and
all have disappeared. But the destruction in the wide zone occupied
by French and Prussian outposts is beyond description. I got to Paris
the morning after the shooting of Generals Clement Thomas and Le-

That is what you have done for the Three Material Useful Things.

Then for the Three Immaterial Useful Things. For Admiration, you have learnt contempt and conceit. There is no lovely thing ever yet done by man that you care for, or can understand; but you are persuaded you are able to do much finer things yourselves. You gather,

comte, and in consequence did not see so much of it as I otherwise might have done; but round the villages of Sceaux, Bourg-la-Reine, L'Hay, Vitry, and Villejuif, I saw an amount of havoc which the subscriptions to the French Horticultural Relief Fund will go but a very small way to repair. Notwithstanding all his revolutions and wars, the Frenchman usually found time to cultivate a few fruit-trees, and the neighbourhood of the villages above mentioned were only a few of many covered by nurseries of young trees. When I last visited Vitry, in the autumn of 1868, the fields and hill-sides around were everywhere covered with trees; now the view across them is only interrupted by stumps about a foot high. When at Vitry on the 28th of March, I found the once fine nursery of M. Honoré Desfresne deserted, and many acres once covered with large stock and specimens cleared to the ground. And so it was in numerous other cases. It may give some notion of the effect of the war on the gardens and nurseries around Paris, when I state that, according to returns made up just before my visit to Vitry and Villejuif, it was found that round these two villages alone 2,400,400 fruit and other trees were destroyed. As to the private gardens, I cannot give a better idea of them than by describing the materials composing the protecting bank of a battery near Sceaux. It was made up of mattresses, sofas, and almost every other large article of furniture, with the earth stowed between. There were, in addition, nearly forty orange and oleander tubs gathered from the little gardens in the neighbourhood visible in various parts of this ugly bank. One nurseryman at Sceaux, M. Keteleer, lost 1,500 vols. of books, which were not taken to Germany, but simply mutilated and thrown out of doors to rot. . . . Multiply these few instances by the number of districts occupied by the belligerents during the war, and some idea of the effects of glory on gardening in France may be obtained.

“W. ROBINSON.”

and exhibit together, as if equally instructive, what is infinitely bad, with what is infinitely good. You do not know which is which; you instinctively prefer the Bad, and do more of it. You instinctively hate the Good, and destroy it.*

Then, secondly, for Hope. You have not so much spirit of it in you as to begin any plan which will not pay for ten years; nor so much intelligence of it in you, (either politicians or workmen), as to be able to form one clear idea of what you would like your country to become.

Then, thirdly, for Love. You were ordered by the Founder of your religion to love your neighbour as yourselves.

You have founded an entire Science of Political Economy, on what you have stated to be the constant instinct of man—the desire to defraud his neighbour.

And you have driven your women mad, so that they ask no more for Love, nor for fellowship with you; but stand against you, and ask for “justice.”

* Last night (I am writing this on the 18th of April) I got a letter from Venice, bringing me the, I believe, too well-grounded, report that the Venetians have requested permission from the government of Italy to pull down their Ducal Palace, and “rebuild” it. Put up a horrible model of it, in its place, that is to say, for which their architects may charge a commission. Meantime, all their canals are choked with human dung, which they are too poor to cart away, but throw out at their windows.

And all the great thirteenth-century cathedrals in France have been destroyed, within my own memory, only that architects might charge commission for putting up false models of them in their place.

Are there any of you who are tired of all this? Any of you, Landlords or Tenants? Employers or Workmen?

Are there any landlords,—any masters,—who would like better to be served by men than by iron devils?

Any tenants, any workmen, who can be true to their leaders and to each other? who can vow to work and to live faithfully, for the sake of the joy of their homes?

Will any such give the tenth of what they have, and of what they earn,—not to emigrate with, but to stay in England with; and do what is in their hands and hearts to make her a happy England?

I am not rich; (as people now estimate riches), and great part of what I have is already engaged in maintaining art-workmen, or for other objects more or less of public utility. The tenth of whatever is left to me, estimated as accurately as I can, (you shall see the accounts,) I will make over to you in perpetuity, with the best security that English law can give, on Christmas Day of this year, with engagement to add the tithe of whatever I earn afterwards. Who else will help, with little or much? the object of such fund being, to begin, and gradually—no matter how slowly—to increase, the buying and securing of land in England, which shall not be built upon, but cultivated by Englishmen, with their own hands, and such help of force as they can find in wind and wave.

I do not care with how many, or how few, this thing is begun, nor on what inconsiderable scale,—if it be but in two or three poor men's gardens. So much, at least, I

can buy, myself, and give them. If no help come, I have done and said what I could, and there will be an end. If any help come to me, it is to be on the following conditions:—We will try to make some small piece of English ground, beautiful, peaceful, and fruitful. We will have no steam-engines upon it, and no railroads; we will have no untended or unthought-of creatures on it; none wretched, but the sick; none idle, but the dead. We will have no liberty upon it; but instant obedience to known law, and appointed persons: no equality upon it; but recognition of every betterness that we can find, and reprobation of every worseness. When we want to go anywhere, we will go there quietly and safely, not at forty miles an hour in the risk of our lives; when we want to carry anything anywhere, we will carry it either on the backs of beasts, or on our own, or in carts, or boats; we will have plenty of flowers and vegetables in our gardens, plenty of corn and grass in our fields,—and few bricks. We will have some music and poetry; the children shall learn to dance to it and sing it;—perhaps some of the old people, in time, may also. We will have some art, moreover; we will at least try if, like the Greeks, we can't make some pots. The Greeks used to paint pictures of gods on their pots; we, probably, cannot do as much, but we may put some pictures of insects on them, and reptiles;—butterflies, and frogs, if nothing better. There was an excellent old potter in France who used to put frogs and vipers into his dishes, to the admi-

ration of mankind; we can surely put something nicer than that. Little by little, some higher art and imagination may manifest themselves among us; and feeble rays of science may dawn for us. Botany, though too dull to dispute the existence of flowers; and history, though too simple to question the nativity of men;—nay—even perhaps an uncalculating and uncovetous wisdom, as of rude Magi, presenting, at such nativity, gifts of gold and frankincense.

Faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.



ENVY.

Drawn thus by Giotto in the Chapel of the Arena at PADUA.

LETTER VI.

DENMARK HILL,

MY FRIENDS,

1st June, 1871.*

THE main purpose of these letters having been stated in the last of them, it is needful that I should tell you why I approach the discussion of it in this so desultory way, writing (as it is too true that I must continue to write,) "of things that you little care for, in words that you cannot easily understand."

I write of things you little care for, knowing that what you least care for is, at this juncture, of the greatest moment to you.

And I write in words you are little likely to understand, because I have no wish (rather the contrary) to tell you anything that you can understand without taking trouble. You usually read so fast that you can catch nothing but

* I think it best to publish this letter as it was prepared for press on the morning of the 25th of last month, at Abingdon, before the papers of that day had reached me. You may misinterpret its tone; and think it is written without feeling; but I will endeavour to give you in my next letter, a brief statement of the meaning, to the French and to all other nations, of this war, and its results: in the meantime, trust me, there is probably no other man living to whom, in the abstract, and irrespective of loss of family and property, the ruin of Paris is so great a sorrow as it is to me.

the echo of your own opinions, which, of course, you are pleased to see in print. I neither wish to please nor displease you ; but to provoke you to think ; to lead you to think accurately ; and help you to form, perhaps, some different opinions from those you have now.

Therefore, I choose that you shall pay me the price of two pots of beer, twelve times in the year, for my advice, each of you who wants it. If you like to think of me as a quack doctor, you are welcome ; and you may consider the large margins, and thick paper, and ugly pictures of my book, as my caravan, drum, and skeleton. You would probably, if invited in that manner, buy my pills ; and I should make a great deal of money out of you ; but being an honest doctor, I still mean you to pay me what you ought. You fancy, doubtless, that I write—as most other political writers do—my “ opinions ; ” and that one man’s opinion is as good as another’s. You are much mistaken. When I only opine things, I hold my tongue ; and work till I more than opine—until I know them. If the things prove unknowable, I with final perseverance, hold my tongue about them, and recommend a like practice to other people. If the things prove knowable, as soon as I know them, I am ready to write about them, if need be ; not till then. That is what people call my “ arrogance.” They write and talk themselves, habitually, of what they know nothing about ; they cannot in any wise conceive the state of mind of a person who will not speak till he knows ; and then tells them, serenely, “ This is so ; you

may find it out for yourselves, if you choose ; but, however little you may choose it, the thing is still so."

Now it has cost me twenty years of thought, and of hard reading, to learn what I have to tell you in these pamphlets ; and you will find, if you choose to find, it is true ; and may prove, if you choose to prove, that it is useful : and I am not in the least minded to compete for your audience with the "opinions" in your damp journals, morning and evening, the black of them coming off on your fingers, and beyond all washing, into your brains. It is no affair of mine whether you attend to me or not ; but yours wholly ; my hand is weary of pen-holding, my heart is sick of thinking ; for my own part, I would not write you these pamphlets though you would give me a barrel of beer, instead of two pints, for them ;—I write them wholly for your sake ; I choose that you shall have them decently printed on cream-coloured paper, and with a margin underneath, which you can write on, if you like. That is also for your sake ; it is a proper form of book for any man to have who can keep his books clean ; and if he cannot, he has no business with books at all ; it costs me ten pounds to print a thousand copies, and five more to give you a picture ; and a penny off my sevenpence to send you the book—a thousand sixpences are twenty-five pounds ; when you have bought a thousand *Fors* of me, I shall therefore have five pounds for my trouble—and my single shopman, Mr. Allen, five pounds for his ; we won't work for less, either of us ; not that we would not, were

it good for you ; but it would be by no means good. And I mean to sell all my large books, henceforward, in the same way ; well printed, well bound, and at a fixed price ; and the trade may charge a proper and acknowledged profit for their trouble in retailing the book. Then the public know what they are about, and so will tradesmen ; I, the first producer, answer, to the best of my power, for the quality of the book ;—paper, binding, eloquence, and all : the retail-dealer charges what he ought to charge, openly ; and if the public do not choose to give it, they can't get the book. That is what I call legitimate business. Then as for this misunderstanding of me—remember that it is really not easy to understand anything, which you have not heard before, if it relates to a complex subject ; also it is quite easy to misunderstand things that you are hearing every day—which seem to you of the intelligiblest sort. But I *can* only write of things in my own way and as they come into my head ; and of the things I care for, whether you care for them or not, as yet. I will answer for it, you must care for some of them, in time.

To take an instance close to my hand : you would of course think it little conducive to your interests that I should give you any account of the wild hyacinths which are opening in flakes of blue fire, this day, within a couple of miles of me, in the glades of Bagley wood through which the Empress Maude fled in the snow, (and which, by the way, I slink through, myself, in some discomfort, lest the gamekeeper of the college of the gracious Apos-

tle St. John should catch sight of me; not that he would ultimately decline to make a distinction between a poacher and a professor, but that I dislike the trouble of giving an account of myself.) Or, if even you would bear with a scientific sentence or two about them, explaining to you that they were only green leaves turned blue, and that it was of no consequence whether they were either; and that, as flowers, they were scientifically to be considered as not in existence,—you will, I fear, throw my letter, even though it has cost you sevenpence, aside at once, when I remark to you that these wood-hyacinths of Bagley have something to do with the battle of Marathon, and if you knew it, are of more vital interest to you than even the Match Tax.

Nevertheless, as I shall feel it my duty, some day, to speak to you of Theseus and his vegetable soup, so to-day, I think it necessary to tell you that the wood-hyacinth is the best English representative of the tribe of flowers which the Greeks called “Asphodel,” and which they thought the heroes who had fallen in the battle of Marathon, or in any other battle, fought in just quarrel, were to be rewarded, and enough rewarded, by living in fields full of; fields called, by them, Elysian, or the Fields of Coming, as you and I talk of the good time “Coming,” though with perhaps different views as to the nature of the to be expected goodness.

Now what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said the other day to the Civil Engineers (see *Saturday Review*,
5*

April 29th), is entirely true ; namely, that in any of our colliery or cartridge-manufactory explosions, we send as many men (or women) into Elysium as were likely to get there after the battle of Marathon ; * and that is, indeed, like the rest of our economic arrangements, very fine, and pleasant to think upon ; neither may it be doubted on modern principles of religion and equality, that every collier and cartridge-filler is as fit for Elysium as any heathen could be ; and that in all these respects the battle of Marathon is no more deserving of English notice. But what I want you to reflect upon, as of moment to you, is whether you *really* care for the hyacinthine Elysium you are going to ? and if you do, why you should not live a little while in Elysium here, instead of waiting so patiently, and working so hardly, to be blown or flattened into it ? The hyacinths will grow well enough on the top of the ground, if you will leave off digging away the bottom of it ; and another plant of the asphodel species, which the Greeks thought of more importance even than hyacinths—onions ; though, indeed, one dead hero is represented by Lucian as finding something to complain of even in Elysium, because he got nothing but onions there to eat. But it is simply, I assure you, because the French did not understand that hyacinths and onions were the principal

* Of course this was written, and in type, before the late catastrophe in Paris, and the one at Dunkirk is, I suppose, long since forgotten, much more our own good beginning at—Birmingham—was it ? I forget, myself, now.

things to fill their existing Elysian Fields, or Champs Elysées, with, but chose to have carriages, and roundabouts instead, that a tax on matches in those fields would be, now-a-days, so much more productive than one on Asphodel; and I see that only a day or two since even a poor Punch's show could not play out its play in Elysian peace, but had its corner knocked off by a shell from Mont Valérien, and the dog Toby "seriously alarmed."

One more instance of the things you don't care for, that are vital to you, may be better told now than hereafter.

In my plan for our practical work, in last number, you remember I said, we must try and make some pottery, and have some music, and that we would have no steam-engines. On this I received a singular letter from a resident at Birmingham, advising me that the colours for my pottery must be ground by steam, and my musical instruments constructed by it. To this, as my correspondent was an educated person, and knew Latin, I ventured to answer that porcelain had been painted before the time of James Watt; that even music was not entirely a recent invention; that my poor company, I feared, would deserve no better colours than Apelles and Titian made shift with, or even the Chinese; and that I could not find any notice of musical instruments in the time of David, for instance, having been made by steam.

To this my correspondent again replied that he supposed David's "twangling upon the harp" would have been un-

satisfactory to modern taste ; in which sentiment I concurred with him, (thinking of the Cumberland procession, without dancing, after its sacred, cylindrical Ark). We shall have to be content, however, for our part, with a little “twangling” on such roughly-made harps, or even shells, as the Jews and Greeks got their melody out of, though it must indeed be little conceivable in a modern manufacturing town that a nation could ever have existed which imaginarily dined on onions in Heaven, and made harps of the near relations of turtles on Earth. But, to keep to our crockery, you know I told you that for some time we should not be able to put any pictures of Gods on it ; and you might think that would be of small consequence : but it is of moment that we should at least try—for indeed that old French potter, Palissy, was nearly the last of potters in France, or England either, who could have done so, if anybody had wanted Gods. But nobody in his time did ;—they only wanted Goddesses, of a demi-divine-monde pattern ; Palissy, not well able to produce such, took to moulding innocent frogs and vipers instead, in his dishes ; but at Sèvres and other places for shaping of courtly clay, the charmingest things were done, as you probably saw at the great peace-promoting Exhibition of 1851 ; and not only the first rough potter’s fields, tileries, as they called them, or Tuileries, but the little den where Palissy long after worked under the Louvre, were effaced and forgotten in the glory of the house of France ; until the House of France forgot also that to it, no less than the House of Is-

rael, the words were spoken, not by a painted God, "As the clay is in the hands of the potter, so are ye in mine;" and thus the stained and vitrified show of it lasted, as you have seen, until the Tuileries again become the Potter's field, to bury, not strangers in, but their own souls, no more ashamed of Traitorhood, but invoking Traitorhood, as if it covered, instead of constituting, uttermost shame;—until, of the kingdom and its glory there is not a shard left, to take fire out of the hearth.

Left—to men's eyes, I should have written. To their thoughts, is left yet much; for true kingdoms and true glories cannot pass away. What France has had of such remain to her. What any of us can find of such, will remain to us. Will you look back, for an instant, again to the end of my last Letter, p. 99, and consider the state of life described there:—"No liberty, but instant obedience to known law and appointed persons; no equality, but recognition of every betterness and reprobation of every worseness; and none idle but the dead."

I beg you to observe that last condition especially. You will debate for many a day to come the causes that have brought this misery upon France, and there are many; but one is chief—chief cause, now and always, of evil everywhere; and I see it at this moment, in its deadliest form, out of the window of my quiet English inn. It is the 21st of May, and a bright morning, and the sun shines, for once, warmly on the wall opposite, a low one, of ornamental pattern, imitative in brick of wood-work (as if it had been

of wood-work, it would, doubtless, have been painted to look like brick). Against this low decorative edifice leans a ruddy-faced English boy of seventeen or eighteen, in a white blouse and brown corduroy trousers, and a domical felt hat; with the sun, as much as can get under the rim, on his face, and his hands in his pockets; listlessly watching two dogs at play. He is a good boy, evidently, and does not care to turn the play into a fight;* still it is not interesting enough to him, as play, to relieve the extreme distress of his idleness, and he occasionally takes his hands out of his pockets, and claps them at the dogs to startle them.

The ornamental wall he leans against surrounds the county police-office, and the residence at the end of it, appropriately called "Gaol Lodge." This county gaol, police-office, and a large gasometer, have been built by the good people of Abingdon to adorn the principal entrance to their town from the south. It was once quite one of the loveliest, as well as historically interesting, scenes in England. A few cottages and their gardens, sloping down to the river-side, are still left, and an arch or two of the great monastery; but the principal object from the road is now the gaol, and from the river the gasometer. It is curious that since the English have believed (as you will find the editor of the *Liverpool Daily Post*, quoting to you from Macaulay, in his leader of the 9th of this month),

* This was at seven in the morning, he had them fighting at half-past nine.

“the only cure for Liberty is more liberty” (which is true enough, for when you have got all you can, you will be past physic), they always make their gaols conspicuous and ornamental. Now I have no objection, myself, detesting, as I do, every approach to liberty, to a distinct manifestation of gaol, in proper quarters; nay, in the highest, and in the close neighbourhood of palaces; perhaps, even, with a convenient passage, and Ponte de’ Sospiri, from one to the other, or, at least, a pleasant access by water-gate and down the river; but I do not see why in these days of “incurable” liberty, the prospect in approaching a quiet English county town should be gaol, and nothing else.

That being so, however, the country-boy, in his white blouse, leans placidly against the prison-wall this bright Sunday morning, little thinking what a luminous sign-post he is making of himself, and living gnomon of sun-dial, of which the shadow points sharply to the subtlest cause of the fall of France, and of England, as is too likely, after her.

Your hands in your own pockets, in the morning. That is the beginning of the last day; your hands in other people’s pockets at noon; that is the height of the last day; and the gaol, ornamented or otherwise (assuredly the great gaol of the grave), for the night. That is the history of nations under judgment. Don’t think I say this to any single class; least of all specially to you; the rich are continually, now-a-days, reproaching you with your wish to be idle. It is very wrong of you; but, do

they want to work all day, themselves? All mouths are very properly open now against the Paris Communists because they fight that they may get wages for marching about with flags. What do the upper classes fight for, then? What have they fought for since the world became upper and lower, but that they also might have wages for walking about with flags, and that mischievously? It is very wrong of the Communists to steal church-plate and candlesticks. Very wrong indeed; and much good may they get of their pawnbrokers' tickets. Have you any notion (I mean that you shall have some soon), how much the fathers and fathers' fathers of these men, for a thousand years back, have paid their priests, to keep them in plate and candlesticks? You need not think I am a republican, or that I like to see priests ill-treated, and their candlesticks carried off. I have many friends among priests, and should have had more had I not long been trying to make them see that they have long trusted too much in candle-sticks, not quite enough in candles; not at all enough in the sun, and least of all enough in the sun's Maker. Scientific people indeed of late opine the sun to have been produced by collision, and to be a splendidly permanent railroad accident, or explosive Elysium: also I noticed, only yesterday, that gravitation itself is announced to the members of the Royal Institution as the result of vibratory motion. Some day, perhaps, the members of the Royal Institution will proceed to inquire after the cause of—vibratory motion. Be that as it may, the

Beginning, or Prince of Vibration, as modern science has it,—Prince of Peace, as old science had it,—continues through all scientific analysis, His own arrangements about the sun, as also about other lights, lately hidden, or burning low. And these are primarily, that He has appointed a great power to rise and set in heaven, which gives life, and warmth, and motion, to the bodies of men, and beasts, creeping things, and flowers; and which also causes light and colour in the eyes of things that have eyes. And he has set above the souls of men, on earth, a great law or Sun of Justice or Righteousness, which brings also life and health in the daily strength and spreading of it, being spoken of in the priests' language, (which they never explained to anybody, and now wonder that nobody understands,) as having "healing in its wings:" and the obedience to this law, as it gives strength to the heart, so it gives light to the eyes of souls that have got any eyes, so that they begin to see each other as lovely, and to love each other. That is the final law respecting the sun, and all manner of minor lights and candles, down to rush-lights; and I once got it fairly explained, two years ago, to an intelligent and obliging wax-and-tallow chandler at Abbeville, in whose shop I used to sit sketching in rainy days; and watching the cartloads of ornamental candles which he used to supply for the church at the far east end of the town, (I forget what saint it belongs to, but it is opposite the late Emperor's large new cavalry barracks), where the young ladies of the better class in Abbeville

had just got up a beautiful evening service, with a pyramid of candles which it took at least half-an-hour to light, and as long to put out again, and which, when lighted up to the top of the church, were only to be looked at themselves, and sung to, and not to light anybody, or anything. I got the tallow-chandler to calculate vaguely the probable cost of the candles lighted in this manner, every day, in all the churches of France ; and then I asked him how many cottagers' wives he knew round Abbeville itself who could afford, without pinching, either dip or mould in the evening to make their children's clothes by, and whether, if the pink and green bees-wax of the district were divided every afternoon among them, it might not be quite as honourable to God, and as good for the candle-trade ? Which he admitted readily enough ; but what I should have tried to convince the young ladies themselves of, at the evening service, would probably not have been admitted so readily ;—that they themselves were nothing more than an extremely graceful kind of wax-tapers which had got into their heads that they were only to be looked at, for the honour of God, and not to light anybody.

Which is indeed too much the notion of even the masculine aristocracy of Europe at this day. One can imagine them, indeed, modest in the matter of their own luminousness, and more timid of the tax on agricultural horses and carts, than of that on lucifers ; but it would be well if they were content, here in England, however dimly phosphorescent themselves, to bask in the sunshine of

May at the end of Westminster Bridge, (as my boy on Abingdon Bridge), with their backs against the large edifice they have built there, an edifice, by the way, to my own poor judgment less contributing to the adornment of London, than the new police-office to that of Abingdon. But the English squire, after his fashion, sends himself to that highly decorated gaol all spring-time ; and cannot be content with his hands in his own pockets, nor even in yours and mine ; but claps and laughs, semi-idiot that he is, at dog-fights on the floor of the House, which, if he knew it, are indeed dog-fights of the Stars in their courses, Sirius against Procyon ; and of the havock and loosed dogs of war, makes, as *The Times'* correspondent says they make, at Versailles, of the siege of Paris, "the Entertainment of the Hour."

You think that, perhaps, an unjust saying of him, as he will, assuredly himself. He would fain put an end to this wild work, if he could, he thinks.

My friends, I tell you solemnly, the sin of it all, down to this last night's doing, or undoing, (for it is Monday now, I waited before finishing my letter, to see if the Sainte Chapelle would follow the Vendôme Column ;) the sin of it, I tell you, is not that poor rabble's ; spade and pickaxe in hand among the dead ; nor yet the blasphemer's, making noise like a dog by the defiled altars of our Lady of Victories ; and round the barricades, and the ruins, of the Street of Peace.

This cruelty has been done by the kindest of us, and

the most honourable ; by the delicate women, by the nobly-nurtured men, who through their happy and, as they thought, holy lives, have sought, and still seek, only “the entertainment of the hour.” And this robbery has been taught to the hands,—this blasphemy to the lips,—of the lost poor, by the False Prophets who have taken the name of Christ in vain, and leagued themselves with his chief enemy, “Covetousness, which is idolatry.”

Covetousness, lady of Competition and of deadly Care ; idol above the altars of Ignoble Victory ; builder of streets, in cities of Ignoble Peace. I have given you the picture of her—your goddess and only Hope—as Giotto saw her ; dominant in prosperous Italy as in prosperous England, and having her hands clawed then, as now, so that she can only clutch, not work ; also you shall read next month with me what one of Giotto’s friends says of her—a rude versifier, one of the twangling harpers ; as Giotto was a poor painter for low price, and with colours ground by hand ; but such cheap work must serve our turn for this time ; also, here, is pourtrayed for you* one of the ministering angels of the goddess ; for she herself, having ears set wide to the wind, is careful to have

* Engraved, as also the woodcut in the April number, carefully after Holbein, by my coal-waggon-assisting assistant : but he has missed his mark somewhat, here ; the imp’s abortive hands, hooked processes only, like Envy’s, and pterodactylous, are scarcely seen in their clutch of the bellows, and there are other faults. We will do it better for you, afterwards.

wind-instruments provided by her servants for other people's ears.



This servant of hers was drawn by the court portrait painter, Holbein; and was a councillor at poor-law boards, in his day; counselling then, as some of us have, since, "Bread of Affliction and Water of Affliction" for the vagrant as such,—which is, indeed, good advice, if you are quite sure the vagrant has, or may have a home; not otherwise. But we will talk further of this next month, taking into council one of Holbein's prosaic friends, as well as that singing friend of Giotto's—an English lawyer and country gentleman, living on his farm at Chelsea—(somewhere near Cheyne Row, I believe)—and not unfrequently visited there by the King of England, who would ask himself unexpectedly to dinner at the little Thames-side farm, though the floor of it was only strewn with green rushes. It was burnt at last, rushes, ricks, and all; some said because bread of affliction and water of afflic-

tion had been served to heretics there, its master being a stout Catholic ; and, singularly enough, also a Communist ; so that because of the fire, and other matters, the King at last ceased to dine at Chelsea. We will have some talk, however, with the farmer, ourselves, some day soon ; meantime and always, believe me,

Faithfully yours,

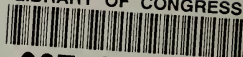
JOHN RUSKIN.

POSTSCRIPT.

25th May (early morning), Reuter's final telegram, in the *Echo* of last night, being "The Louvre and the Tuileries are in flames, the Federals having set fire to them with petroleum," it is interesting to observe how in fulfilment of the Mechanical Glories of our age, its ingenious Gomorrah manufactures, and supplies, to demand, her own brimstone; achieving also a quite scientific, instead of miraculous, descent of it from Heaven; and ascent of it, where required, without any need of cleaving or quaking of earth, except in a superficially "vibratory" manner.

Nor can it be less encouraging to you to see how, with a sufficiently curative quantity of Liberty, you may defend yourselves against all danger of over-Production, especially in art; but, in case you should ever wish to re-"produce" any of the combustibles (as oil, or canvas), used in these Parisian Economies, you will do well to inquire of the author of the "Essay on Liberty," whether he considers oil of linseed, or petroleum, as best fulfilling his definition, "utilities fixed and embodied in material objects."

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